

TRAVELLING
SKETCHES
IN
RUSSIA AND SWEDEN

DURING THE YEARS
1805, 1806, 1807, 1808.

By ROBERT KER(PORTER. .

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WITH FORTY-ONE PLATES.
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P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following pages, while relinquishing them for the press, felt a thousand hesitations whether or not to commit himself so far to the mercy of the world, as to submit a simple familiar correspondence to its eyes.

He had engaged to accompany the Drawings in this Work with some explanations, and a general sketch of the manners and customs of the people who form their subjects. There was matter in these letters to furnish what was required; but the peculiar circumstances of the writer on his return to England, finding the friend to whom they had been addressed dying, would not allow him leisure nor spirits to throw them into any other shape. Hence the Work ap-

pears with every imperfection; and three immoveable ones, he fears, are prominent: continual egotism, an appearance of ostentation, and perhaps a too unreserved disclosure of his own situation and feelings.

To such charges the fact must reply — As these pages were originally written in the free intercourse of confidence, the writer naturally mentioned himself as going hither or thither, or being engaged in such and such scenes. He also did not hesitate to acknowledge the kindnesses he received from persons of all ranks; and so, perhaps, by giving way to gratitude, he may incur the suspicion of vanity. For allowing his heart to be so frequently seen, he can only repeat the same apology: he wrote to a friend! to one who had shared his thoughts for many years; to one whose merits were, like his misfortunes, infinite; and whose youth has sunk blighted to the grave. Captain Henry Caulfield was this friend: and thus to mention him, is, alas! a poor tribute of respect which affection dictates, and sorrow renders sacred.

PREFACE.

On looking over these pages, the writer found the domestic sentiments so interwoven with the general subjects, that he could not separate them without recomposing the whole. This he had not time to do : and as he has, by the peculiarities of his fate, been already so brought before the eye of the Public that his history is not only well known, but his feelings more than guessed at, he thought it best to submit himself at once to its indulgence, and let the letters go forth even in their original simplicity.

Hence, it is not the studied work of an Author bringing forward deep researches, valuable discoveries, and consequential observations, that is now laid before the Public, but the familiar correspondence of a friend, noticing the manners of the people with whom he associates, their fashions, their amusements, the sentiments of the day ; and mingling with these a few occurrences happening to himself, and the reflections to which they give rise.

Such then is this work, merely Travelling Sketches : as

sketches, he trusts a candid Public will consider them; and not pretending to have done more, he hopes his readers will judge him by his pretensions, and not withhold the indulgence he requires.

ROBERT KER PORTER.

Lisbon, October, 1808.

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TRAVELLING SKETCHES

IN

RUSSIA AND SWEDEN.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

AS your "mind's eye" has ever followed me in all my travels, whether through the forests of Germany or the gardens of France, in these more distant regions I shall still wish for the same companion; and feel each pleasure doubled, when I think that in idea you accompany me, and enjoy, as myself, the interesting varieties of this vast empire. I am now safely arrived at the imperial residence of Russia. But as the road to it was not quite so "flat and unprofitable" as most of the ways in this world, I must lead you through the Sound before I present you at St. Petersburg.

On the 29th of August, 1805, I embarked on board the *Almeria*, bound to Cronstadt. The wind setting fair, I bade a short adieu to my country, and all in it that I held dear; a foreign land was before me, fraught with ten thousand objects to interest the mind; and

forgetting the pains of parting in the joys of expected return, I surrendered all my thoughts to the happy future. The weather continuing favourable, not many days elapsed before I saw the shores of Old England gradually disappear, and those of Denmark rise along the horizon. The next morning we cast anchor at Elsineur.

You may be well assured that my impatience to get on shore was much increased by the meditations which occupied me as the ship drew near a city which had been immortalized by the pen of our matchless Shakspeare. The lapse of ages and the fables of the poet, were all lost in the reality of his painting: the moment of his scene seemed present with me; and eager to traverse every part of this consecrated ground, I had already followed Hamlet every where; I had measured the deep shadows of the platform, encountered the grey ghost of the Royal Dane, had killed Polonius in the Queen's closet, and drowned poor Ophelia in the willowed stream! With my fancy thus raised I stepped into a boat, and soon reached the pier-head of this memorable and once regal city. But "what a falling off was there!" Wapping possesses the splendor of ancient Rome, when compared with the modern aspect of Elsineur. Judge then how soon my eye and mind were called back to the narrow footpaths of dull matter-o'-fact; but you cannot judge, for you cannot imagine, how much more rapidly I was made to forget the sweet-scented flowers of the "pretty Ophelia," in the *haut gouts* which now assailed my senses. The weather being hot, various effluvia and exhalations sported about so pestiferously, that it was impossible to proceed without the shield of a handkerchief to the nose, if you wished to prevent actual sickness: which accident, by the bye, would be considered of little consequence; as small ceremony is used here, either as to time, place, or opportunity, in making every addition to this Augean repository. The immortal scavenger of Elis would cer-

tainly be at his labour now had he begun at Elsineur : I found it a sufficiently Herculean toil to wade through this wilderness of filth. In vain I sought for decayed battlements and mouldering towers ; not a single vestige presented itself that bore the smallest trace of this town ever having been hallowed by the mausoleum of an Ophelia, or proudly decorated with the stately walls of a royal palace. However, as Balbeck, for want of proper investigation, lay hidden many centuries in the desert ; so might all I wished to see, be yet lurking in some unexplored spot : my ignorance might be my only impediment. To get rid of this, I looked about for an informer ; and exerting the key to such knowledge, soon found a clue to the labyrinth ; which led me to a place, a mile from the town, that bears the name of Hamlet's Garden.

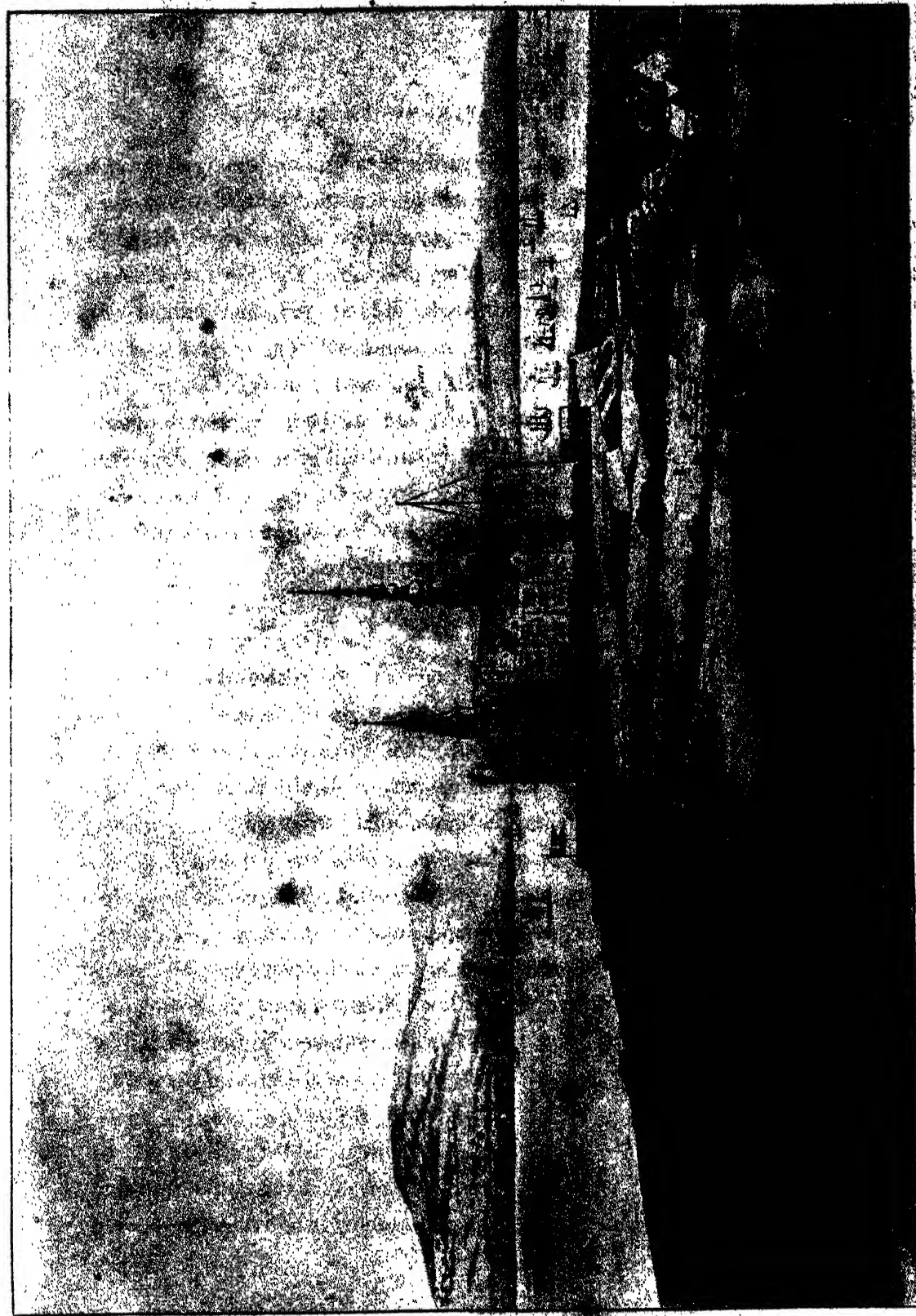
I entered a gateway which opened to a walk well shaded with lofty trees. Striking into this avenue, I momentarily expected to be gratified by the appearance of venerable and magnificent ruins. Ruins did appear ; but alas, it was a *Satyr to Hyperion* ! a modern wretched building, even in youth tumbling to decay ! It was easily to be discerned that the fabric and the gardens were of the same date ; and retained no relic of ancient interest, excepting the tradition, which affirms that to be the spot where once stood the Danish palace ; and where was enacted that tragedy, which has been so gloriously immortalized by the genius of our great dramatic bard. Admitting this tradition to be fact, the mind then looks through what is, to what was, and once more ennobles the scene. In this temper then, I shall describe its degenerated aspect ; and the natural beauties of its situation, which, being stamped by the Creator himself, neither time nor depraved taste has had power to alter.

The present edifice is erected on the brow of a gently rising hill ;

the summit of which is gained by means of a winding walk cut through a small shrubbery. Not being more entertained with the near than the distant view of this sorry representative of the royal Hamlet's abode, I turned to the surrounding prospect. The town of Elsineur on the plain beneath, presents itself ill-built, red, and without any public building or spire, to vary its sameness. Far to the left of the city stands the castle of Kronenberg, a bold and fine feature. The waves of the Cattegut roll at its feet ; and are bounded on the opposite side, by the Swedish coast. Four hundred sail of merchant ships were lying there at anchor, which added greatly to the interest of the picture. I made a sketch on the spot, to which I refer you ; and as I go on with my description you can follow me with your eye.

The small village on the distant shore is Elsenberg ; where the King of Sweden is now personally inspecting some new coal-works, which are likely to reward his pains. When you look on the fortress of Kronenberg, you will perceive how proudly it is situated. The form of the building, with its spires and minarets, is nobly picturesque : the fabric is of grey stone ; and its innumerable windows, varied towers, and other architectural ornaments, make it a striking and beautiful contrast to the dull uniformity of the town. This castle being intended as a protection to the Sound, and to command its entrance, is well fortified on all sides ; and has a very respectable provision of cannon towards the water. When Lord Nelson passed the Sound, upwards of three hundred pieces of artillery opened upon him from this part of the works ; but they failed of effect, as every ball fell short of the mark.

Since that period the inside of this edifice has been closed to the eyes of strangers. However, I was told that there was little reason to lament the prohibition, as it contains nothing worthy notice, save a



pair of ebony doors and a few old portraits. Not being able to gain any information respecting the age of the fortress, I venture to guess it at about three hundred years. Probably, as the situation is so commanding, on this very spot once stood the stately turrets of Hamlet the Dane. It seems better suited to a regal abode, than the poor little hill now recorded as having been its site.

Considering myself now in the very haunts of Shakspeare's northern hero, I must linger a little longer to inform you of a few interesting circumstances relating to him, which I have gathered at the fountain-head; from the very source whence our poet must have drawn the incidents of his tragedy. I mean the annals of Denmark, written by Saxo Grammaticus in the twelfth century. The work is in Latin; and as you may not have met with it, I will finish my account of Hamlet's Garden with a short abstract from that Prince's history. It will be curious to compare the dialogues of the original, with their counterpart in the play.

Florwendillus, King of Jutland, married Geruthra or Gertrude, the only daughter of Ruric King of Denmark. The produce of this union was a son called Amlettus. When he grew towards manhood, his spirit and extraordinary abilities excited the envy and hatred of his uncle, who, before the birth of Amlettus, was regarded as presumptive heir to the crown. Fengo, which was the name of this haughty Prince, conceived a passion for his sister-in-law the Queen; and meeting with reciprocal feelings, they soon arranged a plan; which putting into execution, he ascended the throne of his brother and espoused the widowed Princess. Amlettus (or Hamlet) suspecting that his father had died by the hand, or the devices of his uncle, determined to be revenged. But perceiving the jealousy with which the usurper eyed his superior talents; and the better to conceal his hatred and inten-

tions, he affected a gradual derangement of reason; and at last acted all the extravagancies of an absolute madman. Fengo's guilt induced him to doubt the reality of a malady so favourable to his security; and suspicious of some direful project being hidden beneath assumed insanity, he tried by different stratagems to penetrate the truth. One of these was to draw him into a confidential interview with a young damsel who had been the companion of his infancy; but Hamlet's sagacity, and the timely caution of his intimate friend, frustrated this design. In these two persons we may recognise the Ophelia and Horatio of Shakspeare. A second plot was attended with equal want of success. It was concerted by Fengo that the Queen should take her son to task in a private conversation; vainly flattering himself that the Prince would not conceal his true state from the pleadings of a mother. Shakspeare has adopted every part of this scene; not only the precise situation and circumstances, but the sentiments, and sometimes the very words themselves. The Queen's apartment was the appointed place of conference; where the King, to secure certain testimony, had previously ordered one of his courtiers to conceal himself *under a heap of straw*: so says the historian; and though Shakspeare, in unison with the refinement of more modern times, changes that rustic covering for the royal tapestry, yet it was even as Saxo Grammaticus relates. In those primitive ages, straw, hay, or rushes strewed on the floor, were the usual carpets in the chambers of the great. One of our Henry's, in making a progress to the north of England, previously sent forward a courier to order *clean straw* at every house where he was to take his lodging. But to return to my subject.

The Prince, suspecting there might be a concealed listener, and that it was the King, pursued his wild and frantic acts; hoping that by some lucky chance he might discover his hiding-place. Watchful of

all that passed in the room, as he dashed from side to side he descried a little movement of the uneasy courtier's covering. Suddenly Hamlet sprung on his feet, began to crow like a cock, and flapping his arms against his sides, leaped upon the straw ; feeling something human under him, he snatched out his sword and thrust it through the unfortunate lord. The barbarism of the times is most shockingly displayed in the brutal manner with which he treats the dead body ; but for the honour of the Danish Prince, we must suppose that it was not a merely wanton act, but done the more decidedly to convince the King, when the strange situation of the corpse was seen, how absolutely he must be divested of reason. Being assured he was now alone with his mother, in a most awful manner he turns upon her and avows his madness to be assumed ; he reproaches her with her wicked deeds and incestuous marriage : and threatens a mighty vengeance upon the instigator of her crime. I have the more particularly translated part of this speech,* as it will shew you, in its original state, the rough diamond which Shakspeare has polished to so transcendant a brightness.

“ Hear me, most polluted woman ! Thou who art loathsome from thy crimes and thy hypocrisy ; whose very breath is impregnated with the falsehood of thine heart ! Thou, who only seemest to lament one, who claims and deserves thy truest tears ! — Shame ! — By what a course of folly hast thou become a common whore ! Lasciviously and unlawfully holding in thy detestable soul, conditions with thy husband's murderer — embracing in incest this bosom fiend — and staining with him, the sacred bed of that King — whose son will avenge his blood ; and destroy all the

* The coarseness of this translation will be pardoned, as it is literal ; otherwise than literal, it would be inexpressive of the manners it is intended to represent.

obscene allurements to thy execrable adultery, in the object of thy brutal passion.—Granted, thou *mare-mated*, that thy victory is gained ; that thou art now linked to the sun of thy lechery—nature of brutes !—and like them ye lose no moments of gratification, impelled but by your beastly wishes.—I had forgot—to one worn out and self consumed by much enjoyment, these examples are excellent ; and to a married woman's mind, most suitable.—Aye, forsooth, it must be preferable too, to carry on such warm desires as far as they will extend,—that she should be a husband's brother's wife!—And to add yet unto its pleasures, she must not stand to gain the foul accomplishment, but by the bearing down her wedded lord.—Thou dam of cruelty!——Yes! I have played the mad man, raved!—With this cloak of willing dulness I have wrapped about my reason ; it is my guard, while I watch to spring upon my prey. My soul at every hour calls aloud for a murdered father's revenge.—The moment is now arrived.—I waited the opportunity, and time has now given what I so impatiently desired—though, alas! not in all deserving it!—Dwell not, mother, on the dark and secret causes which actuated thy son's apparent madness ; wail not for my wild ravings, nor the actions of my insanity : turn thy lamentations on thyself ; bemoan thine own infamy, and thine own deformed heart.—Look to thyself!—Deny not thy depravity and faultiness ; for these, thy sorrow is necessary indeed.—Tear such foul weeds from thy bosom, mother ; and check the furor of thy crimes.—Thou hast once walked in the light of virtue! call back to your remembrance its serenity, its joys : turn to its pure flame ; and once more let thy son see it beam upon his mother's face!”

I well know how feeble is my unpractised pen in transmitting the strength of the original : but take it as the shadow of a sublime subject ; and you will see sufficient to afford you an opportunity of judg-

ing how much the Hamlet of Saxo Grammaticus, and the Hamlet of Shakspeare thought alike.

In the historian, we find that the admonitions of Hamlet awakened the conscience of the Queen, and recalled her to penitence and virtue. The King, observing the change, became doubly suspicious of the Prince; and baffling some of the preliminary steps he took to vengeance, Hamlet was entrapped by him into an embassy to England. He sent along with him two courtiers, who bore private letters to the English monarch, requesting him, as the greatest favour he could confer upon Denmark, to compass, by secret and sure means, the death of the Prince as soon as he landed. Hamlet, during the voyage, had reason to suspect the mission of his companions; and by a stratagem obtaining their credentials, he found the treacherous mandate: and changing it for one wherein he ordered the execution of the two lords, he quietly proceeded with them to the British shore. On landing, the papers were delivered; and the King, without further parley, obeyed what he believed the request of his royal ally: and thus did treason meet the punishment due to its crime. It seems that love in those ages was very rapid in its effects; a very summer fly, to-day revelling in sweets, to-morrow numbered with the dust! — for the daughter of the King being charmed with the person and manners of the foreign Prince, evinced such marks of tenderness, that Hamlet could not but perceive the depth of his conquest. — He was not insensible to her attractions; and receiving the King's assent, in the course of a few days led her to the nuptial altar. Fair as the lady might be, love was not sufficient for his filial heart; still it remembered his father's wrong, and panted for revenge. — Amidst all joys, he was like a perturbed ghost that could not rest; and before many suns had rose and set, he obtained a hard wrung leave from his bride; once more set sail, and

appeared at Elsinour just in time to be a witness of the splendid rites which Fengo (supposing him now to be murdered) had prepared for his funeral.—On the proclamation of his arrival, he was welcomed with enthusiasm by the people, whose idol he was; and who had been overwhelmed with grief, when Fengo publicly announced to them his sudden death in England.—The King, inflamed with so ruinous a disappointment; and becoming doubly jealous of his growing popularity, now affected no conciliation, but openly manifested his hatred and hostility.—Hamlet again had recourse to his pretended madness; and committed so many alarming acts, that Fengo, fearing their direction, ordered his sword to be locked in its scabbard, under a plea of guarding the lunatic from personal harm; but the true reason was, he dreaded the point of it himself.—After various adventures, at last the Prince accomplishes the death of his uncle's adherents, and vengeance on the fratricide himself, by setting fire to the palace during the debauch of a midnight banquet.—Rushing in amidst the flames, he kills Fengo with his own hand, reproaching him at the moment with his murder, adultery, and incest.—Immediately on this act of retribution, he was proclaimed lawful successor to the throne, and crowned with all due solemnity.

Thus far Shakspeare treads in the steps of the annalist: the only difference is in the fate of the hero; in the one he finds a kingdom, in the other a grave. Saxo Grammaticus carries the history further; and after the crowning of Hamlet as King, brings him again into Britain; where, in compliment to that land of beauty, he marries a second wife, the daughter of the Scottish King. Polygamy was no crime in those days: and where person was usually the sole attraction, it is not wonderful that the heart should wander from fair to fair. The soul had then little to do in the attachments between man and woman; she, un-

educated in every thing, but the doctrine of passive obedience and the instinct of self-preservation, bestowed her hand where policy inclined her parents to give it; and loved the warrior she espoused, for the valour that afforded her protection: he, devoted to arms and to glory, saw in woman only the object of dalliance, and the continuer of his race. Such was the state of the most endearing band in society, till the promulgation of that religion which now happily fills the greatest part of the globe, taught woman the rank she holds in creation; and imparted to man the power she has to bless his days.

Hamlet brought both his wives to Denmark, and prepared for a long life of prosperity and peace. But the sword hung over his head; war burst around him, and he fell in combat by the hand of Vigelotes the son of Ruric. Saxo Grammaticus sums up his character in a few words. "He was a wise Prince and a great warrior. Like Achilles he had the principal actions of his life wrought on his shield. The daughter of the King of Scotland casting her eye on it, loved him for the battles he had won, and became his bride." So much for Hamlet.

In my way from the Garden which bears his name, I came up with a regiment of Danish soldiers, exercising near the castle. They were about a thousand strong; and with five hundred artillery, did the duty of the town and citadel. I never saw a stouter, and I may add, seldom a more awkward body of men. Their clothing was coarse and ill-made; but had it been on the well-appointed figure of a well-drilled soldier, I could fancy its looking even elegant. The jacket is scarlet, with sleeves and tassels of light blue; long white pantalooned gaiters; a round hat bound with white, and turned up on the right side with a white feather. A broad belt, to which hangs an unwieldy cartridge-box (a fashion prevalent in every country I have seen excepting England);

another belt round the waist, carries a very long bayonet. Their muskets are lighter than those used by the French, and differ little in appearance from ours. I cannot say any thing very flattering either as to the manual exercise, manœuvres, &c. or even of the military air of this specimen of Danish soldiery. I learnt that six years is the limited time for their constant service : after this period they are set at liberty, with no other reserve than being obliged, for two months in every year, to attend parade and go through the usual duty of a soldier. Their pay is about three pence a day, including every thing. Clothing is issued to them once in three years ; and as they are not very nice disciplinarians, you can easily imagine what a Falstaffian array they are in by the time their new wardrobe comes round. Being abridged of time, I could not examine further into their merits ; else, perhaps, we might have found “ that within which passeth shew !” but, as in temporal as well as spiritual matters there is generally an outward and visible sign of the inward ability, much cannot be augured from the surface of the Danish *corps militaire*, by your obedient servant, &c.

LETTER II.

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

ON re-embarking and leaving Elsineur, the accidental disagreeables of that city were soon forgotten in the natural beauties of the view. The shore, all along the Danish side, presents the most lovely stretch of landscape I ever beheld. Mount Edgumbe is looked upon as the paradise of England : and what Mount Edgumbe is in one spot only, so appears the whole of Denmark from Elsineur to Copenhagen. The land is high, and undulating in various romantic and sublime forms. Rich woods, broken by park-like openings and verdant pastures, and interspersed with country-houses and villages for an extent of twenty-three miles, form the clothing of these beautiful hills. A striking contrast to the black and naked line of the opposite coast.

We were too far at sea to discern the capital as distinctly as we wished ; but by the assistance of a glass I could plainly perceive its ramparts, and those floating batteries whose cannon bereft England of so many of her gallant sons. Since the action with Lord Nelson off this city, Denmark has been solicitous to increase its strength, by replacing all the works (and adding to them), which were destroyed by the fleet of our great Admiral.

Being on this subject, I will not deny myself the pleasure of relating an anecdote of that distinguished hero ; the circumstance took place during the battle of the Sound. It at least proves that no situation,

however dangerous, can disconcert the truly brave man, or render him inactive to those minutiae, which being watched by the enemy, betray our weakness, or proclaim our power. You must well remember, from the gazettes of that period, and private accounts, how tremendous was the engagement, and how dreadful the slaughter. In the midst of these horrors, surrounded by the dying and the dead, the British Admiral ordered an officer, bearing a flag of truce, to go on shore with a note to the Crown Prince. It contained a proposal to His Royal Highness to acquiesce, without further delay, in the propositions of the British government; not only to put a stop to the present effusion of blood on both sides, but to save from total destruction Copenhagen and its arsenals, which he would otherwise level with the water. Whilst His Lordship was writing with all the calmness of a man in his study, he desired Colonel Stewart to send some one below for a light, that he might seal his dispatch. Colonel Stewart obeyed; but none appearing with a candle; when Lord Nelson had nearly completed his letter, he enquired the reason of such neglect, and found that the boy who had been sent for it was killed in his way by a cannon shot. The order was repeated: upon which Colonel Stewart observed, "Why should Your Lordship be so particular to use wax? why not a wafer? The hurry of battle will be a sufficient apology for the violation of etiquette." "It is to prove, my friend," replied Lord Nelson, "that we are in no hurry; that this request is not dictated by fear, or a wish on our part to stop the carnage from the least apprehension of the fate of this day to us, that I am thus particular. Were I to seal my letter with a wafer, it would still be wet when it reached the shore; it would speak of haste. Wax is not the act of an instant; and it impresses the receiver accordingly." The reasoning of the Admiral was duly honoured by the result. The Danes acceded to his proposal, and a cessation of hostilities was the consequence.

Having passed through the Sound, a spot ever memorable to England, we proceeded up the Baltic; and during our voyage came in view of several fine islands, which gave much variety and interest to the scene.

On the night of the twelfth of September we arrived at Cronstadt. We landed next morning; when I was amazingly struck by the extraordinary appearance of almost every individual I met. Men with long beards, brown and sun-burnt skins, strangely shaped caps, and greasy skin habits of all possible forms; were mingled with a few, dressed in the fashion of our nation; and numberless others in the dapper-cut uniforms of their own military, naval, and civil departments. This widely-contrasted crowd, meeting my eyes at the moment my ears were first saluted with a language I had never before heard, made altogether so strange an impression on my mind as is not to be described. I seemed in a new region; and indeed every sense was called forth to wonder and exercise.

The island on which the town is founded, extends nearly five English miles in length, but no more than one in breadth. Peter the Great having fixed on St. Petersburg as his residence, built and fortified this place as a protection to the mouth of the river Neva, on which was situated his infant capital. The works were completed after drawings by his own hand, which are now to be seen at Cronstadt; and they were of such strength as to require little addition by the succeeding Tzars. The most that has since been done, was to face them with immense stones from the rocks of Finland, and to crown their heights with innumerable pieces of cannon. The well-constructed forts in the gulph, as well as the difficulty of the navigation, from shoals and other impediments, render this place almost impregnable in itself, and make it a certain security to St. Petersburg, against any attack by water.

Every convenience that is necessary in a maritime depot, is to be found at Cronstadt. Basins, docks, canals, and spacious moles, fronted by solid and colossal masses of granite. Hundreds of vessels from all nations, annually ride with ease and safety within these protections; and in an harbour adjoining, which is solely appropriated to the navy, are many fine ships of war. The town itself has a very commanding appearance; and at the first glance of the public buildings, you are struck with their magnificence. But draw near, and many a wart and wrinkle is discovered on this fair face. Parts of even the most superb edifices are falling into ruins; and it is with difficulty you can ascend the straggling staircases which lead to the offices of those employed in acts of state, they are so obstructed by heaps of rubbish, bricks and mortar. However, as the caprices of the late Emperor, by palsying improvement, and corrupting what was already done, threw the whole empire into disorder and decay; so the virtues of his son (who like a presiding genius has his eye over all) will soon restore Cronstadt to the faultless magnificence it formerly boasted.

During my short stay at this port, I received many kindnesses from Governor, Admiral Hennacoff. The merits of that excellent man command my esteem, as much as his attentions do my gratitude. I must acquaint you with one *trait* in his character; and then I am sure you will revere him as I do. When the Emperor Paul, in one of his frantic moods, ordered the English residents at Cronstadt to be sent, during the severities of a very inclement winter, many thousand wersts up the country, Admiral Hennacoff threw himself between the rigor of the Emperor's commands and these unfortunate men. Indeed he treated them with so much humanity and unexampled generous providence, that words are too weak to express his goodness and their sense of obligation. And all this was undertaken at the risk of his own fortunes;

perhaps, of his life! How grateful is such a view of human nature! How does it prove the pure feelings of a good man, who prefers incurring the chance of ruin, before giving up the godlike joy of dispensing comfort and protection amongst hundreds of desolated strangers lawlessly sentenced to banishment; and too probably to death! When tranquillity became once more established between the two countries, the Russian company, much to their honour, presented the noble Admiral with a piece of plate, containing an inscription worthy of his virtues.

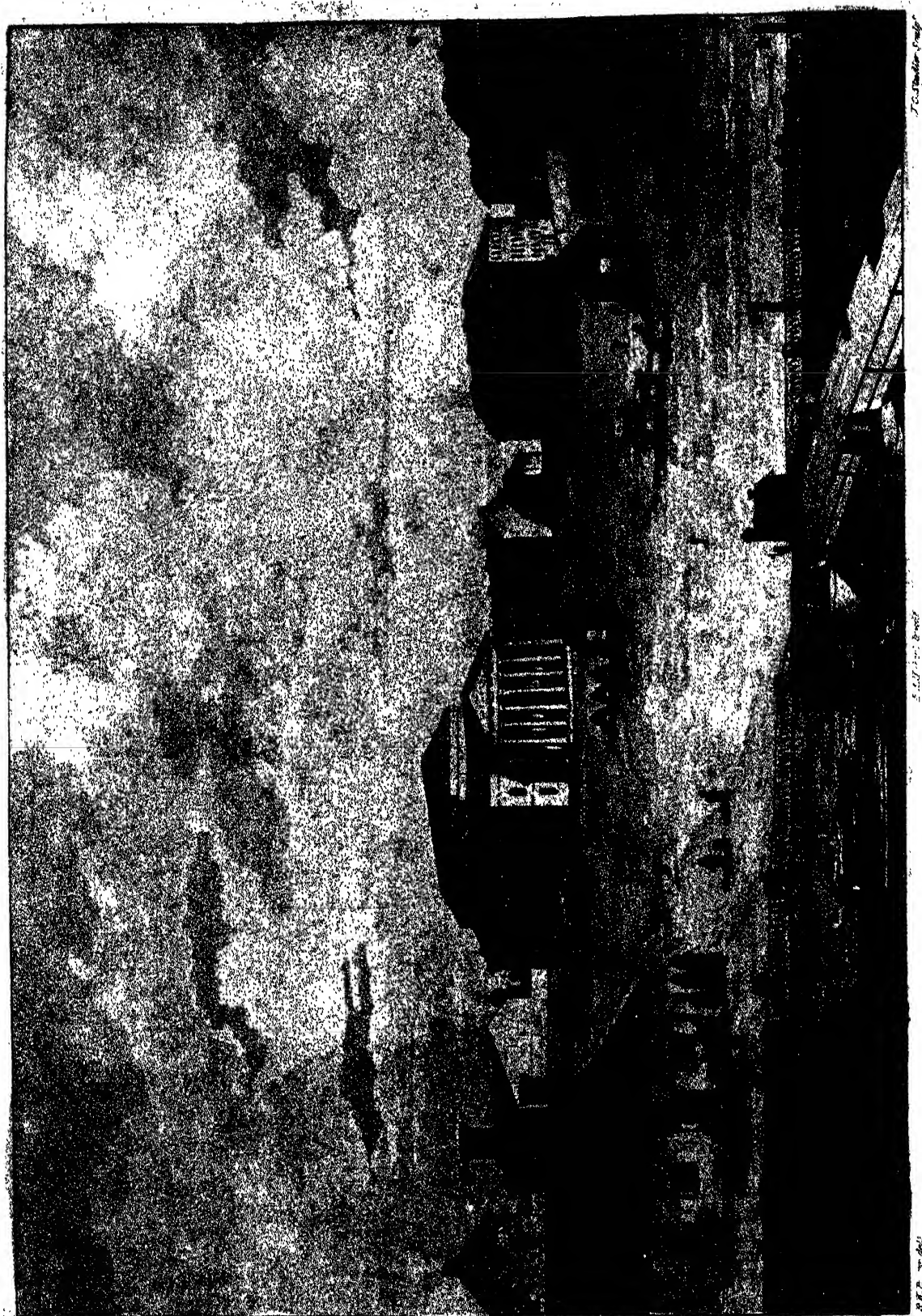
Having bidden adieu to this benevolent man, and arranged every thing for my departure to St. Petersburg, I hired a boat in conjunction with two other gentlemen (purposing to go by water), into which we put ourselves, with all the moveables allowed. But alas! that was no more than what a handkerchief would contain! The rest of our property having previously been imperially sealed in due form and order, by the attendants from the custom-house. It was to follow us with the cargo of the ship "as soon as possible." But as this *soon as possible* sometimes lasts a very long time, travellers are very often put to great inconvenience for want of a wardrobe; the government allowance not amounting even to Sterne's "half dozen shirts and pair of black silk breeches,"

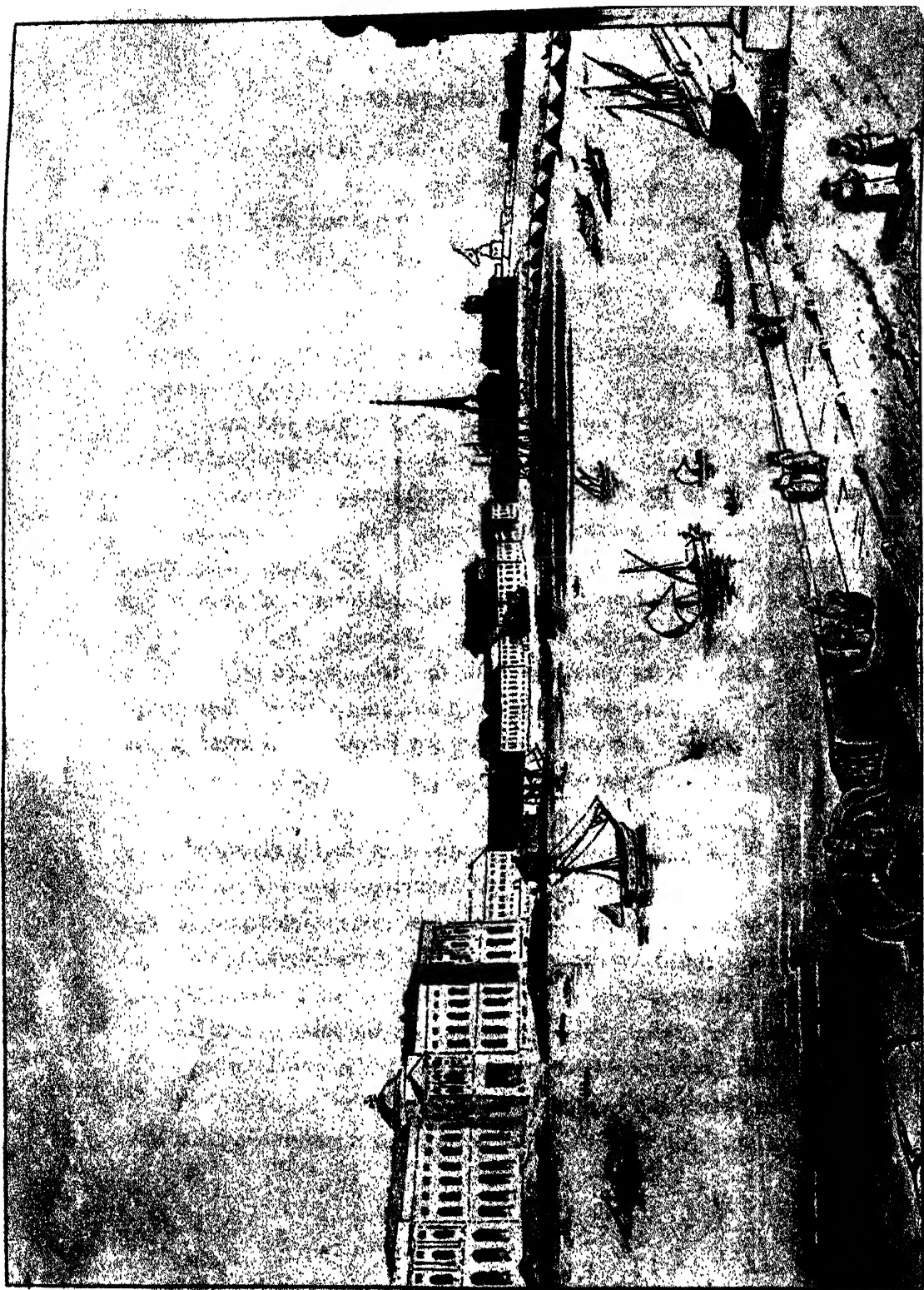
The boat in which we embarked had a canopy, draped and fashioned like those belonging to the bodies-corporate, which on gala days adorn the Thames. Ten men, and a superior who guided the helm, formed our crew; all were appareled alike, in a sort of low *beef-eater* hat bound with yellow and decorated with a feather; a blue tunic with sleeves, covered their body; and round its centre was wrapped an orange-coloured sash, whose ends hung down a great, and rather incommodious length; loose trowsers of blue stripe, tucked carelessly into clumsy boots, completed their habiliments. Some were bearded

short, others shaven, but most with well-curled mustachios ; and wearing their hair hanging in an equal length from ear to ear, like the fringe on a curtain or hammer-cloth. This, by the way, is the usual mode which all the common people adopt in fashioning their locks ; and certainly it protects the head, neck, and ears from the piercing cold ; and is far from being unpicturesque, if not graceful.

The wind blew perfectly fair ; and the people having little to do, we gave them a glass or two of brandy to amuse them. Our present had the desired effect ; and they entertained both themselves and us, through the remainder of our voyage, by singing, with much simplicity and ease, several of their national airs. The strains are wild, and possess many pleasing and melancholy passages : yet the whole bore a strong tone of monotony and abruptness. The one you heard (given to me by the Prince de Courland while in England), is sufficient to convey a very just idea of the general character of these northern songs ; and I think the very monotony which dwells so long on the ear with one or two plaintive notes, is the cause of their deep melancholy impression. I have remarked this effect in old Scottish Laments, and also in the wild dirges of the Irish peasantry.

The distance between Cronstadt and St. Petersburg being not more than twenty-eight miles, we arrived at the latter place the same evening ; passing, as we sailed smoothly along, a beautiful shore to our right, covered with the most luxuriant scenery of trees, gardens, and the spacious mansions of the nobility. On landing, I took up my quarters in one of the best hotels the city affords ; but as it is as expensive as the dearest in London, without half of their neatness and comforts, I will not dwell longer on a point this metropolis so decidedly fails in. Tomorrow I shall resume my pen, and with a subject more worthy your attention ; namely, the whole city of St. Petersburg.





J. C. Muller sculp

F. A. Baker del

J. K. Pomer del

LETTER III.

St. Petersburg, 1805.

I AM at a loss, my dear friend, where to commence a description of this splendid city. Every object excites admiration; and those objects are so numerous, that I find it difficult to select what you might deem most interesting, from an assemblage of such, to me, equally prominent beauties. I, who have come direct from London, may perhaps view St. Petersburg with peculiar impressions. The plainness of our metropolis, the almost total neglect of all architectural graces in the structure of even the best houses, and the absolute deformity of many of the inferior sort; all these things strike the eye as forcibly, though in an opposite direction, as mine was with the magnificence of St. Petersburg. Such grandeur and symmetry in building, I never before beheld in any of the different capitals to which my fondness for travel has conducted me. Every house seems a palace, and every palace a city.

On every side are long and wide streets of highly decorated stone edifices; interspersed with the still more stately mansions of the nobility, the roofs of which are curiously painted in rich colours, harmoniously blending with the gilded domes and spires of the neighbouring churches. Although this city abounds in public buildings, in a style of gigantic architecture no where else to be found, yet the taste of the Emperor and the industry of his subjects are daily undertaking new works; which, when completed, will still more strongly call forth the admiration of the traveller. Amongst the most beautiful of these growing structures

are the Kazan church, the new Exchange, the Manege for the chevalier guards, and the Façade of the Admiralty. I suppose no country can boast so long and uninterrupted a street as the *Great and English Quay*; the granite front and pavement of which are unparalleled. The canals are worthy of the same august hand; and the superb bridges which clasp them from side to side, rear their colossal pillars in all the majesty of imperial magnificence. The dingy hue of bricks, or the frippery of plaister, seldom offends the eye in this noble city. Turn where you will, rise immense fabricks of granite: and did you not know the history of the place, you might suppose that it had been founded on a vast plain of that rocky production; whence had been derived the stones of the buildings; and in the bosom of which had been dug the river and canals that intersect its surface. But it is from the quarries of Finland that the Russians dig these bodies of granite, and transport and place them here in lasting monuments of their own unwearied industry. That mass on which is erected the immortal statue of Peter, the First, is one huge instance of their indefatigable labour; and the forest of columns in the new Metropolitan church, is not a less worthy proof of the vigour with which they pursue so meritorious a toil. This edifice, as I before said, is dedicated to the *Mother of God of Kazan*. Though far from being completed, sufficient is elevated of its plan to give a tolerably accurate idea of the sublime feature it will make in the face of this city. The architect, who is a Russian, seems to have had the image of St. Peter in his mind when he laid the foundations of this building; and if it be finished as it is begun, I have no doubt of its being a very powerful rival to the two great cathedrals of Rome and London. The pillars intended for the inside of the church, are to be each of one entire stone; the shaft, in length fifty-two feet, polished to the utmost perfection, and surmounted with a capital of the Corinthian order richly gilt and bur-

nished. Every other ornament will be in corresponding taste. Niches are formed on the exterior, for the reception of bronze statues of Saints, fifteen feet high. And at some distance, in front of the building, is to be erected a single column of granite of two hundred feet in length; a piece of that size, sufficient to form it, having lately been discovered. Its magnitude will be so immense as to exceed the height of Pompey's pillar by many feet. It is expected that in the course of four or five years the whole work will be completed. At that period the old church is to be pulled down; and thus an area will be left that must considerably improve the situation of the new.

The architect of this great design was formerly a slave of Count Strogonoff. But that nobleman, out of respect to his talents, gave him his liberty. Indeed no generous mind could have done otherwise; it would have been sacrilege to the image of God in man, the richly endowed soul, the creative power of genius! to have trammelled it with the degrading reflections of bondage.

Many of the labourers employed on these buildings, come some thousand versts from the interior: and when the frost sets in, they retire thither again, to await the more genial season which will allow them to recommence their toil. The multitudes now engaged in forming the various parts of these large works, are interesting and curious. All difficulties connected with their business, are overcome by human exertions alone. What in England would easily be performed by one horse, with a little mechanical aid, is here achieved by the united strength of numbers of men. Hence there is much useless labour to regret. Frequently we see a hundred men, with ropes and handspikes, busied in accomplishing no more than one quarter of that number, with a few of our assisting inventions, would easily finish in half the time.

Setting aside utility, these groupings add to the picturesque of the scene; which is considerably heightened by their long beards, rugged sheepskins, and uncouth attitudes. How strange it is to look on these apparently savage beings, and think that from their hands arise such elegant and classical structures! Indeed I never saw, in all its parts, so regularly built a city; nor in any place, so much attention to keep all in due order. The present Emperor, who like its illustrious founder, has the perfecting of this residence at heart, leaves no suggestion unexecuted, which can increase its ornament, or the people's convenience.

Amidst the numberless improvements which are daily making, is a flat pavement on one side of most of the principal streets; the benefit of which will be felt by all persons; it being otherwise dangerous to walk without some division from the carriage way, where those vehicles are always passing to and fro with a rapidity that threatens the life or limbs of every unfortunate pedestrian.

While I am yet in the street, though out of the way of these formidable attackers of personal safety; I will give you some account of their shapes and appearance as they roll along. In every respect they differ widely from ours. In the first place, their cleanliness is not of the first water; and a drop of oil, or any other liquid, never by any lucky chance falls upon the leathern departments of the carriage or harness to soften their rigidity. The duty of the coachman seems merely to drive; and as men of rank and fortune are entitled to be drawn by four horses, a postilion is also necessary; but strange to tell, this equestrian youth rides the off horse; a contrary custom to that practised in every country I have seen. Whenever the machine is in a state of rapidity, it is the office of this boy to be on the continual bawl of the Russian word for *take care, take care!* A precaution, you will understand

from what I have before said, to be indispensable. The rate at which these fellows drive is seldom less than a gallop; and as this is the fashionable pace for carriages of all sorts, you can easily judge how safe it must be for passengers moving in an humbler sphere.

The decorations of the horses driven by the nobility, are very striking. The harness is leather (most profusely spread, almost into net-work, over the creature), studded and embossed with brass, and various other nobs, buckles, crescents, and tassels, with great taste and elegance. This caparison is quite eastern, and has a most superb effect. The horses are in harmony with their ornaments, as their manes and tails are allowed to grow to an immense length; they are plaited and tied up very gracefully. The figure of the animal is fine, and partakes of the Persian in shape and air; his motions are loose and rapid; and apparently so wild, that the spectator must suppose that nature has been his only master.

Hackney coaches (in our form), are not known; but as the extent of the city is very great, conveniences of that kind being absolutely necessary, a sort of hireable machine is to be had, which pretty well supplies the deficiency. It is denominated a Drojeka, and carries an appearance at first sight uncommonly odd and ridiculous. I know not how to describe the visible effect it had upon my mind. It bears not the least affinity to any of the wheeled tribe on our side the water; but looks more like a gigantic insect of the grasshopper genus, pursuing and clinging to the heels of an affrighted horse. As this strange conveyance is totally unknown in England, I shall bring you closer to it, and point out, as correctly as I can, its peculiar shape and modes.

This effort of northern ingenuity runs on four low wheels; being a sort of parallelogram, with four leathern wings projecting at no great

distance from its body, and which, making an unexpected curve, ingeniously pass in a semicircular line towards the ground ; being intended as a resting place for the feet, and a defence for the traveller against liquid dirt. The part on which you sit is covered with a cushion ; and in order to render the motion more easy, it hangs on springs. The occupier of the carriage seats himself as on a saddle ; and for his better security if inexperienced in this mode of journeying, adheres to the driver (who sits in front), by holding by his sash. Believe me it requires no small degree of education in the art of keeping a seat, to adhere with any decency, much less ease and grace, to the saddle of one of these extraordinary vehicles. And yet, while an Englishman would be bouncing off and on with the clumsiness of a clown in a pantomime, you may see the Russians so perfected by practice, as to sit their wooden-horse with all the elegance of the most managed equestrian. The lightness and velocity with which they pass from one part of the town to another, is incredible, and the expence is by no means considerable, as the equivalent for carrying you three miles, is not more than an English shilling. From this circumstance most of the lower orders can at times command this accommodation ; and indeed the public ones are principally supported by the Russ merchants and other opulent citizens, as the higher ranks all keep carriages of their own. Its many inconveniences, arising from the exposure of the occupier to the dust and sun in summer, and the mud and rain in spring and autumn, render it a vehicle totally incompatible with any ideas of personal neatness or comfort. On the back of the Isvotchic (or driver), a plate is fastened, on which is decyphered the number of the carriage, and the quarter to which it belongs ; in order that should he be insolent, or overcharge his employer, redress may be obtained. There not being an absolutely prescribed fare for given distances, strangers are frequently imposed on by these men, who, like the hackney-coachmen in London, are ever ready to over-reach the unwary.

I am sorry to say that this spirit of extortion is very common at St. Petersburg. And as shop-keepers, and others of the lower orders, make a practice of demanding double the worth of their commodities, travellers, who know not that they will be content with half the sum, are liable either to be defrauded, and leave the place under the impression of its exorbitant expence; or, when they discover the cheat, conceive no very favourable opinion of Russian honesty. But alas! I fear the passion for a hasty accumulation of riches is not peculiar to our northern neighbours. In an ignorant people, just emerging to civilization, we see covetousness without a veil. Eager to share in the good things which are opened to them on every side, they consider not, because they do not yet understand, the superior advantages of character. But are the people who have long enjoyed the privileges of education and polished society, are they exempt from this degrading vice? I am afraid not. With them it is only more modest; aware of its own infamy, it slinks from sight under various masks, while the objects of its contractorships, and the tenantry of the land, are groaning under neglect and oppression. Selfishness is the vice of human nature; and very difficult it is to hold it in the medium between savage avidity and luxurious desires.

Before I reached this city I had been told by many of its great expence. As a single man I did not find it so: but were I to pass a judgment on it from what I have seen, I should say that for a family it would be dear enough. And yet this would not arise from the high charges of any particular articles, but from the customs of society, and the splendor which is here considered as a necessary of life. Under this view it is expensive. But were it fashionable to live here in the simple style which most genteel families do in England, the calculation would be in the opposite scale. It is over-hasty to pronounce a country

although dearer than our own, because one or two commodities may be so: examine further, and you find a counterpoise in articles being cheap at St. Petersburg which are of great price in London: and thus the reasonable merchandise of one country being balanced against the exorbitant charges of another, the equilibrium is kept tolerably even. Provisions are cheap; and so are some other indispensable necessities: 120*l.* annually, will provide a good carriage, two horses, a coachman, and every requisite both for it and the sledge. Fifteen rubles a month (25*l.* per annum), is the common wages for men servants; out of which they board themselves. House-rent is the most chargeable thing here; but the trifling incumbrances entailed on the Russian householder, as national claims, are so small they scarcely deserve mentioning.

In the families of our English merchants resident at St. Petersburg, you may still recall the simplicity of home, in the chastened elegance of their abodes. Their tables, as well as those of other foreign merchants, are always open to their friends; and the warmest hospitality ever ready to welcome all who bring introductions from their correspondents abroad. This truly estimable order of men are held in the highest esteem by the nobles of a metropolis which they so truly benefit and enrich. Many of them possess little paradises on the road leading to the imperial palace of Peterhoff, to which their families resort for the hot and short-lived months of summer. Since my arrival I have paid several visits to these charming retreats, where every thing around reminded me of dear England. The house embosomed in trees, and furnished in the English style; the gardens planted in the same taste; and the language and manners of the inmates; all would have persuaded me to forget I was in a strange land. But I wanted still something more to complete the illusion: look where I would, I could no where see those faces which are ever the dearest objects of remembrance to your friend.

LETTER IV.

St. Petersburg, 1805.

BEFORE I lead you further into St. Petersburg, I must make you pause with me on the shores of the Neva ; there to contemplate the wonderful industry with which its slimy bed has been turned into the firm earth that now supports such a weight of ponderous walls. The city, with its beautiful suburbs, is built on the banks of this river ; the waters of which flow from the vast lake of Ladoga, seventy or eighty versts above St. Petersburg. As the Neva approaches the Gulph of Finland it gradually expands, embracing within its numerous arms several islands, on which is planted the whole of this immense metropolis. These insular plains are covered with streets, churches, gardens and palaces ; and like the Adriatic isles of Venice, are united into one great city, by innumerable bridges.

The manual labour of the early residents in this place, animated by the persevering genius of their glorious monarch, formed the dank and unwholesome marshes into these castellated rocks ; and levelling the wilderness on the shore, where once grew the tangled forest, now stands the stately palace and blooms the gay parterre. The most luxuriant cultivation extends for many miles around the city : and could the immortal founder behold its present Arcadian scenes, and the regal pride of *encolumned* walls, he would acknowledge that his successors had done honour to his name.

The islands of the Neva, which are appropriated to the mansions

and gardens of the nobility, are favourite objects of recreation with the inhabitants of the town, who visit their shady banks in light boats ; and stepping on shore, enjoy all the pleasures of pure air and enlivening nature in these romantic retreats. The house and gardens of Count Strogonoff are the most celebrated, and justly ; for I never saw in any place more picturesque beauty guided by such admirable taste. From the uninterrupted flatness of the situation, the views cannot be striking or varied. It is all one verdant, gorgeous plain ; here smiling in the balmy assemblage of trees and gardens ; there glittering with golden domes and painted spires. Human industry has done every thing here. The very platform of her work, was fixed by herself in the bosom of the ever-shifting waters. On that she planted this goodly frame ; and with the aid of ingenuity and taste, has given to it the last strokes of architectural perfection.

One of the most interesting of the structures which were erected in the early times of the city, is the fortress that Peter the Great built, from a plan drawn by himself. It stands on one of the islands ; and is handsomely faced with granite, being a regularly appointed fort. It is now used as a prison for state criminals. In the church attached to the fortress are deposited the bodies of the imperial family, from Peter the First to the present period. On viewing the tombs of these departed sovereigns, nothing splendid strikes the eye ; nothing disturbs the awful solemnity of the scene. Each sarcophagus is covered with a velvet pall richly embroidered ; but which is only unfolded on holy festivals, or occasionally to gratify the curiosity of a visitor. In the body of the church are many standards, placed there as trophies of the various wars in which this country has been engaged. Swedish, Turkish, Persian, Polish, French, and those of many inferior nations, stand around like a blighted forest, in thick and mouldering majesty. Between these

ensigns of conquest are exhibited others yet more humbling to the vanquished powers. The keys of all the fortresses and cities which the victorious arms of Russia have reduced to subjection ! Ishmael, Occhacoff, Warsaw, and Derbent ; as well as many colossal bunches from more distant regions, for the transitory possession of which, thousands of brave men have paid with their lives ! They were hung up in due order, and named and dated with the greatest exactness. A proud sight for an ambitious and warlike prince ! and an inspiring one for a people who are exposing themselves to the legions of a conqueror that seems to be fortune's minion. Here are the registers of former prowess ; and as they look, they grasp the steel with redoubled vigour, and rush to the field, determined to add to the bannered heap, or perish before their own standards. Man will follow interest to the edge of the precipice, but place honour on the opposite side and he will leap into her arms. When this is the spirit of an army, it is invincible. Such were the soldiers of Peter the Great ; such of Suwarroff ; and many are now in the armies of the present Emperor, who emulate the character and fame of that unconquered general.

The keys of Derbent had been deposited in this church a few days only before I visited it, it being the third time that place had fallen under the Russian arms. Peter the Great was the first to whom it surrendered. Platon Zuboff, in the reign of Catherine II., reduced it a second time. And it is rather extraordinary, in its last defeat, the very man who presented the keys to Zuboff was fated, at a very advanced age, to lay them at the feet of a third conqueror. Here is also the bread and salt which was given with the keys of Warsaw to Field-marshal Suwarroff, as a mark of the entire subjection of that kingdom to the imperial arms. The spire of this edifice is high like that of the Admiralty, and gilt with ducat gold.



In one quarter of the fortress are extensive buildings appropriated to

coining. For the apparatus, the government is indebted to Mr. Bolton of Soho. Several of his people are now here engaged in completing the necessary works.

In the walls and bastions which bulwark this castellated island are cells, or rather state prisons, where many a wretched being has lingered out an anxious life. In one of these places died the son of Peter the First after his condemnation. And here the unhappy and beautiful Princess Tarra-kanoff met her fate. In 1771 the Neva rose to a tremendous height, and inundating part of the city, entirely overflowed the fortress. All who were in the dungeons perished under the waters; and amongst the number, *it is said*, was her whose tale so darkly shadows the brilliant career of the Great Empress.

Take the whole of this fortified island together, with its embattled towers and pinnacles; and when under a setting-sun you view it from the long perspective of the opposite street, no object can be finer. The burnished spire burning in brightness, and casting its stream of light over the turrets of the fortress; the Neva flowing in shining waves at its base, and bearing on its bosom myriads of boats passing and repassing, some filled with the treasures of merchandise, and others in which the happy navigators chant their national strains as they float along. No scene can possess more of the picturesque and beautiful. And when we contrast the gay court air of these northern gondolas with the savage barks from more distant quarters, and take in the variously attired groupes busy on the shore, a wilderness is mingled with the polished features of the view, which makes the whole appear the effect of enchantment.

Having led you through this fatal, romantic island, I shall re-conduct you across the waves, and bring you before the walls of the marble palace and church. The ideas suggested by the names of those two



edifices are those of elegance and splendor. When we speak of a marble structure, and consider the costliness of the material, with the classic uses to which it has generally been appropriated, we expect to behold every beauty of architecture displayed on its splendid surface. But here we see neither the one nor the other : and I will venture to assert, that any person who was not told the palace and church in question were built of marble, might pass them by a hundred times as unworthy of his notice. This valuable stone, when not white, is unfit for any but small and internal decorations, where its composition will be more near the eye. Its veins, blending shades and polish, are lost in the infinite parts and height of a gigantic and extensive building. The marble palace and church are perhaps the most expensive, most observed, and least admirable of any in the city. The first is the residence of the Grand-Duke Constantine; but has nothing to boast of either in the fitting up or furniture.

The foundation of the church was laid by the Empress Catherine, and finished wretchedly with brick by the Emperor Paul. For the honour of the empire, I hope that it will either be altered to the Empress's original design, or pulled down altogether. It stands in one of the finest squares in Europe, called Isaac's Place, and particularly celebrated for containing the admirable equestrian statue of Peter the Great. This work of modern art was erected by the commands of the late Empress; and like all her projects bears the stamp of greatness. The name of the artist is Falconet; he was a Frenchman; but this statue, for genius and exquisite execution, would have done honour to the best sculptors of any nation. A most sublime conception is displayed in the design. The allegory is finely imagined; and had he not sacrificed the result of the whole to the prominence of his groupe, the grand and united effect of the statue and its pedestal striking at once upon the eye, would have been unequalled

in the works of man. A mass of granite of a size at present immense, but formerly most astonishing, is the pedestal. A steep acclivity like that of a rugged mountain carries the eye to its summit, which looks down on the opposite side to a descent nearly perpendicular. The figure of the hero is on horseback, supposed to have attained the object of his ambition, by surmounting all the apparent impossibilities which so arduous an enterprise presented. The victorious animal is proudly rearing on the highest point of the rock, whilst his imperial master stretches forth his mighty arm as the father and protector of his country. A serpent, in attempting to impede his course, is trampled on by the feet of the horse, and writhing in all the agonies of expiring nature. The Emperor is seated on the skin of a bear; and habited in a tunic and a sort of toga which forms the drapery behind. His left hand guides the reins; his right (as I before observed) is advanced straight forward on the same side of the horse's neck. The head of the statue is crowned with a laurel wreath.

Having described its disposition, I shall now speak more minutely of its merits; and, if you will allow me to find any defect in so glorious a piece of workmanship, glance at the few imperfections I was able to discern. The thought seems almost sacrilege; and yet as a mortal's creation, we have no reason to expect it should be exempted from the mark of fallibility. The design is faultless; and executed in a style of greatness worthy the character to whom it is dedicated. The majestic features and heroic expression of the head prove how deeply the artist was impressed with the grandeur of the soul whose outward covering he was thus called upon to pourtray. And yet I must not give the honour entirely to genius, for much of it belongs to love. We all know that it was this tender passion which first discovered the art of commemorating the human form. What the maid of Corinth did by her lover was done by

a young damsel of France with regard to Peter the Great. She loved his person and adored his mind. The wonderful bust which she modelled of him, declares what a godlike image of himself he had stamped on her heart; and the divine manner with which she has given this impression to the eyes of men, is beyond description perfect. Falconet saw this bust, and from its breathing lines formed the head of his statue. The contour of the face expresses the most powerful command; and that exalted, boundless, expansion of thought which so wisely dictated his measures, and confirmed him to pursue them with unabated energy, till they met the full fruition of his wishes in the prosperity and happiness of his people. The position of his out stretched arm is rather stiff; being almost a straight line from the shoulder to the point of the middle finger; in some views we know not whether it be a hand or a truncheon. The waist is too long. Mr. Falconet might plead in excuse that the Emperor was so shaped. That is true; but the artist might have availed himself of the licence allowed to taste, and without any violation of truth a few folds of drapery would have concealed this glaring want of grace. The legs and thighs appear too short for the upper part of the figure; and when we suppose it dismounting and standing by itself, we cannot but think that such insufficient supports would sink under the weight of so colossal a body. The horse, in my opinion, is not to be surpassed. When I was in Paris I saw those fine equestrian statues which the French took from Venice, and set up in the *Place de Carrousel*; but remember nothing in them that was superior to this. To all the beauties of the ancient form, it unites the easy grace of nature, with a fire which pervades every line, and gives such a life to the statue, that as you gaze you expect to see it leap from the pinnacle into the air. There is nothing gravitating in this sublime steed: It would not touch the ground; but seems framed to tread the fields of ether with those of the sun.

The difficulty of keeping so great a mass of weighty metal in so volant an attitude, has been most ingeniously and admirably overcome by the artist. The sweep of the tail, with the hinder parts of the horse, are interwoven with the curvatures of the expiring snake; and together compose a sufficient counterpoise to the figure and fore-part of the animal.

To form an adequate pedestal for so magnificent a work the Empress, at an enormous expence and expenditure of the most indefatigable labour, brought a huge rock of granite from Wyborg. It was transported on large iron balls, and with other mechanical aids, safe and whole to St. Petersburg. I saw a curious model of it, with the dimensions of the stone, journeying machines, and groupes of natives employed about it, at the academy of arts. It was the original wish of the Empress Catherine that on this rough piece of nature the grand founder of St. Petersburg should be placed. But the sculptor, perhaps from the reason I before hinted, decided otherwise. He said it ought to be adapted to the rules of art: and taking it under his own chissel, by fine curves and studied shapes soon robbed it of all sublimity; and left nothing of nature but the matter of which it was composed. Originally perfect for its object, its bold lines and precipitous sides were fine emblems of the country whose ruggedness he had subdued, and whose prejudices of a thousand years he had surmounted and laid at his feet. The present form of the rock, lessened one half from its first dimensions, expresses nothing but the awkward bulging shape of a heavy cloud. Indeed, so bad was the business, that after all the cutting and carving, a large piece was obliged to be joined on again to replace what the jealousy or the false taste of the artist had destroyed. When Catherine beheld the erection for the first time, she expressed so much disappointment at the sight, as to ask with an air of displeased surprise

“what had been made of the rock!” I cannot omit mentioning an interesting circumstance which took place at the presentation of this statue.

The Empress, surrounded by her court, took a station admirably adapted to behold at once the monument she had commanded to be raised to the honour of her predecessor; her example in greatness and her brother in fame. The troops formed a barrier between the scene of action and the populace; leaving a wide open space betwixt it and the platform on which Catherine and her nobility stood. At the discharge of cannon, and amidst the sound of drums and trumpets the scaffolding which concealed this work of art, fell to the ground. A general shout of admiration rent the air; and while all eyes were fixed on the statue, a venerable figure burst through the ranks, and rushing towards the towering image of Peter, prostrated himself before it. The confusion so strange an incident produced immediately excited the Empress's attention and made her inquire into the cause. The object of the tumult was brought before her in the form of an old athletic man, dressed in the naval uniform of the time when the victories of the Emperor she now celebrated, claimed the astonishment and admiration of all Europe.

“Who are you? What are you?” demanded she.

“I am the servant of my old master Peter the Great, and Your Majesty's faithful subject. I served many years under his command. And hearing that I should again behold him to-day, my last act of gratitude was to throw myself at his feet; and had I there breathed out the life that has too long survived him, I should have been glad; it being the only tribute I have now to bestow.”

The Empress turned to Count Tchernachoff, and reproved him for not having informed her of the existence of this venerable seaman,

“ Ah, heaven bless Your Majesty !” interrupted the veteran, “ none here are to blame for my obscurity. Many years have passed since I appeared either in the field of battle or of life : and had not this great occasion called me, I should never, perhaps, have mingled with a crowd again. They who knew my services are now all gone down to their graves.”

After faithfully recounting to the Empress the events of his life (who at first had suspected the circumstance to have been contrived to surprise her), she settled on him a handsome pension ; and from that day so distinguished him, that he became an almost constant inmate in the palace, and a favourite until his death, with the whole of the imperial family. The name of this extraordinary old man was Resen. He was not a native of Russia ; and it is a fact well ascertained, that he served in the French fleet at the memorable battle of *la Hogue*. After which he attached himself to the Tzar Peter, and accompanied him in most of his enterprises in the Baltic and Black Sea ; in which latter station he was when the Emperor died in 1725. He remained there thirty years on duty ; and when he returned to St. Petersburg a sad desolation met him. Time or new interests had so blotted him from the minds of men, that with much difficulty he obtained half-pay. With this poor pittance he retired into an obscure corner of the city, where he dragged through life forgotten and unknown, till the monument of his august master rose like the shade of the departed hero to recall him to men, and to happiness. He passed the residue of his days with every comfort ; and died in the year 1796, at an age exceeding a hundred.

This venerable subject has led me from the statue, on whose rocky pedestal is affixed to each side the following simple inscription in bronze.

PETRO PRIMO. — CATHERINA SECUNDA.

The name alone of either "contained a volume of noble matter," and Catherine was greatly aware of its force. Conscious of her own merit, she turned her eagle eye upon the splendors of Peter the Great and did not shrink. No petty jealousy of the glory of her predecessor operated to make her subtract from the rock on which she engraved his fame. It was a mighty soul, self-satisfied in its own abundant worth, awarding with a generous hand the full laurel to its bright compeer. When I look on the statue of Peter, I see as glorious a monument of Catherine's greatness as of his renown: and like the veteran seaman am ready to fall down before such a remembrancer of kindred virtues; such a remembrancer of the truly patriotic spirit, which turned the desert into a city, and called the perishing natives from their trackless snows to homes of plenty, comfort, and civilization! Adieu.

LETTER V.

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

THE withering hand of autumn has already seized on every vestige of the brief but delightful summer. The evenings are chilled by the breath of approaching winter. She comes not here with the bracing airs of attempered frost; but with a malignant frown blights the lingering herbage, hardens the earth to impenetrable stone, and seems to petrify the very springs of life. So it is that her advances affect me; but I am told that I shall see a very different sight from the one I anticipate, when this formidable season really does appear. At present she is only *casting her shadow before*; and ere it is occupied by her august presence, I must describe a few of the amusements which are called the summer pleasures of St. Petersburg.

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The present Emperor, in consideration of those persons who are not so fortunate as to possess country residences, has established a kind of recreation in this city, which in some measure supplies the deficiency. By his directions, a convenient and well-gravelled walk, about a mile long, and planted with trees, is formed around the southern face of the Admiralty. On this spot tents are pitched, well stored with ices and cakes for the refreshment of the company; who assemble here, as we do at Vauxhall, for the pleasure of beholding the young, the lovely, and the gay. A similar promenade is laid out in the middle of a fine street of many versts in length; which is terminated at one end by the superb colonades of the Admiralty, and at the other, by the monastery of St. Alex-

ander Nefsky. From the regularity and equal lines of this street it is termed the Grand Perspective. These two places, with the granite pavements on both the quays, form what is called the street promenades.

The Summer Garden is another scene of amusement. It is laid out in the Dutch style, in angular and stiff parterres, and studded about with a few wretched and mutilated statues. During the hot months, the shade of the trees, and the crowd of visitors, arrayed like a tulip bed, render it a not unpleasant scene. But for peculiar charms, I cannot say much; the only thing in it really worthy of notice, is a very high and richly wrought iron façade (perhaps unequalled in Europe), which at certain distances is divided by columns of granite. The walk is bounded by the river Neva at one end, and by the Red Palace (so called from its colours) at the other. This huge pile of windows, friezes, pediments, and chimneys, a sort of architectural *metange* of military and domestic ornaments, was built on the site of the old Summer Palace; the residence of Peter the Great. It is surrounded by a wet ditch, defended by draw-bridges; and during the time of the late Emperor, was his favourite abode. He considered it the child of his creation; and a most dear one it proved: for here, in the apartments which look into the plain for exercising the imperial troops, he met with that fate so well known to all. Sir John Carr has described the particulars with great accuracy in his *Northern Summer*. I will not repeat the tale here; but rather refer to the curious particulars contained in that elegant work.

Amongst the many absurd whims which infected the brain of this monarch, was one for painting with various discordant colours, the bridges, watch-houses, and imperial gates throughout the empire. These harlequin jackets were put on every thing that answered to this description, from one end of Russia to the other, by a special ukase, all in one day.

The Red Palace was indebted for its present fiery hue to a very simple circumstance. A lady of high rank, of whom His Majesty was a great admirer, happened to appear one night at a ball where he was present, with a pair of gloves of this colour on her arms. The fancy of Paul was so struck, that the next day it became his favourite tint; and he gave instant orders that his new residence should be painted accordingly. Hence it is called the Red Palace: and a most frightful, glaring appearance it makes. Another caprice of the Emperor tended to fill up the ridiculous of this unfortunate abode. He must needs have his cypher of P. 1st., surmounted with a crown, affixed in every part of the building; for what reason he never declared, only it was his will: and now over every corner, frieze, door, window, or latticed-hole, are these imperial letters multiplied without end. A person once attempted to count them, and left off perfectly weary and in despair, after he had numbered eight thousand.

You must now accompany me to scenes more worthy of their august resident. I will not be so fatiguing as to drag you through the many princely mansions of the nobility, which for magnitude and splendor might in England be denominated palaces. Magnificence is so much the passion of this country, that I should exhaust your patience or your belief, should I attempt to describe all; so I will confine myself to the Emperor's abodes; and shall begin with the Hermitage.

This spot, once the retreat of majesty and love, is only a select part of a vast range of buildings, called the Winter Palace. Here resides during that severe but splendid season, the whole of the imperial family; and here are held the court, and all the public fêtes and festivals. Its architecture is not to be praised, being an enormous mass of bad taste; but its furniture is very noble, richly ornamented, though in rather an anti-

quoted fashion. The Dowager Empress possesses the most elegant and comfortable suite of rooms it contains; and she has spared no expence to decorate the walls with excellent pictures. Murillio and Reynolds hold distinguished places in her selection; with some very superior landscapes and buildings by Robert, an artist, who though of the highest merit, is totally unknown in England. In a particular chamber of this huge palace, I was shewn the crowns, sceptre, and other jewelled insignia of the imperial rank.

The Hermitage, which I before said belongs to this great structure, is connected with it by a gallery, thrown high in the air across a kind of street between the two buildings. It was in this minor palace that the Great Catherine was wont to lay aside her purple, and with a few select friends forget that she was an Empress, that the cares of a mighty state pressed upon her head, that her smile was fortune and her frown dismay. All spoke of ease and urbanity in these chambers, dedicated by her to pleasure and repose; and part of their fitting up was adapted to that design. It was here she received her favourites; and with them enjoyed the true delight of mutual intercourse, unrestrained by regal forms, or public observation.

Being a friend to the fine arts, she adorned the walls of this mansion with many capital pictures; and to perfect the collection, at a considerable expence, added the Houghton Gallery to her own. The pictures were not unpacked during her life; but were taken out and arranged under the auspices of her successor. Since that time the whole of the saloons in which they were hung have undergone a thorough repair and decoration; and, I am sorry to say, that the pictures have also past under this cruel purgatory. The rooms may be improved; but the paintings bear manifest proofs of the reverse. The practice, common in almost all countries, of periodically cleaning and varnishing the works of ancient

and great masters, is ten thousand times more destructive of their durability and value than the hand of time. I am the more surprised at the fate of these, because they are under the inspection of men of judgment and experience: but Custom is an imperious dictator, and so we must resign these monuments of departed genius, very soon to follow their authors into the land “where all things are forgotten!”

The founder of this great empire was the first in the country who introduced a love of pictures. His comprehensive mind embraced every object which promised usefulness, honour, or celebrity to his people: and by his example, the succeeding princes have opened their gates to genius; and we see on all sides, arts, manufactures and commerce, flourishing beneath their auspices.

I am told that it was in Holland and France Peter the Great imbibed his taste for painting. He passed many hours in their academies, talking with the artists, and examining with all the attention of a scholar, their various works. His favourite painters were of the Flemish school; particularly those who excelled in naval subjects, of which he was particularly fond. Adam Silo, being not only an artist but an old seaman, delighted him much by the exactness with which he depicted the ocean and its warlike scenes. Many of this man's pictures may be seen in the Summer Palace at St. Petersburg; and for accuracy in the shipping, and spirit in the sea-fights, I never saw him excelled. It was at the palace of Peterhoff that Peter framed the first general gallery of pictures that was known in Russia. The paintings were chosen and arranged by one Xsel, an artist who had followed the Emperor from Holland, and who died painter to the empire, about sixty years ago. He was more celebrated for judgment than for genius, being little more than a copier of still life; but though, as an artist he was insignificant, as a candid and liberal *connoisseur* he was of the first respectability.

From this great monarch's example has arisen the present admirable collection at the Hermitage, which is even better arranged than that of Peterhoff, having a separate room, as far as circumstances will allow, for the works of each particular master. One disadvantage attends this plan if the superintendants are more attentive to uniformity than to truth : the names of artists are put on canvases which they never saw, much less ever touched. In the Salvator Rosa chamber, there are two exquisite pictures of his ; the Prodigal Son, so well known in England ; and a small sketch of Banditti, in his very best manner. Others are inferior ; but some, too bad to be looked at, whose bastard faces bear his name without a line of his lineaments. Such prostitution of the character of a great artist, is either a shameful mistake, or a shameless imposition ; and for taste and honour's sake should be rectified accordingly.

I pass many hours in culling the flowers from this wilderness of sweets ; and I see enough to convince me that were it weeded with judgment, a collection might then be drawn together which would be unrivalled in any nation. With my pencil I noted on the spot my remarks on a few of the best pictures ; and as you love the art sufficiently well to enjoy even a description of its specimens, I transcribe my little catalogue beneath.

The paintings most prominent in merit, were purchased by the late Empress Catherine ; and the most considerable of these is the Houghton Collection. In proportion as we admire the taste that dictated her munificence, we must shrink from the stigma it casts upon our countrymen, who once possessing such a treasure, would allow it to pass to a foreign land. However, like the picture of some lamented hero for ever lost to his country, we have the portraits of this admirable gallery to remind us of what was once ours, and of our unavailing regrets. The taste of the late Alderman Boydell has preserved copies of these paintings in many excellent drawings.

Most of the originals have undergone the destructive process of cleansing and varnishing; but some few have happily escaped, amongst which is the *Prodigal Son* of Salvator Rosa; a picture unrivalled in expression, truth, and depth of tone.

The *Forge of Vulcan*, by Lucco Giordano, was not so fortunate. But an exquisite piece of harmonious colouring it must originally have been. Parts of the picture are admirable; in others the cleaner is apparent. Some of the figures at the anvil, have lost the mellow tint so beautiful in their companions; leaving a raw, crude and bright pink hue, which destroys all the pleasure produced in regarding the more perfect parts.

The truly renowned picture of *the Holy Doctors of the Church*, by Guido, so finely engraved by Mr. Sharp, is also, like that of Salvator Rosa, in *statu quo*; and a most divine work it is. Perhaps its being situated by the side of so many florid and bustling productions, may to some eyes give it too cold and clayey a hue; however I must say that with me this sobriety much increases its sublimity. In the same saloon are one or two delightful Murillios, particularly a *Flight into Egypt*.

The room appropriated to Teniers contains some of his very best pictures; amongst which are a *Country Wake* (a subject which he always treated so truly), the *inside of a kitchen, larder, &c.* replete with every article of culinary use, as well as vegetables, meat, and game of all sorts, with a portrait of the master of the house and (I suppose) his purveyor. Many inimitable little pictures of *cabarets*, display his usual skill in portraying his countrymen in all states of hilarity and drunkenness.

Bergham's pencil is not less brilliant. Yet there is one picture attributed to him, in execution below his merits, or in subject beyond his powers. If it be really his, how does it prove that even the finest

geniuses will lose themselves when they attempt to change the bent of nature, and climb by a different path to the heights of fame! The work that gave rise to this remark, is a very large one, of *Europa and Jupiter*. But alas, the Beloved of Jove possesses little charms to attract mortals! She is fat and ugly; and her attendants, not to outshine their mistress, are of the same clumsy and disgusting mould. Even the bull is an inferior animal. In short the artist has failed throughout. The design, the colouring, the composition, all are bad. You cannot discover one merit; no trace of Bergham's accustomed bewitching touch, not a tone in the least clear, not a glimpse of his usual and unequalled manner of treating nature.

Both the Wouvermans have given to this collection the most exquisite specimens of their art. Philip's *Skirmish near a Church*, is inexpressibly brilliant. And a *Dutch Sport*, in which a boor is riding at a cat suspended in the air, is, though a barbarous subject, finished with the purest taste. The hue is of a most delightful silvery tone; and such is the fascination of the whole, that it is difficult to withdraw from the contemplation of so beautiful and perfect a work. Near to one of the windows is a small *Deer Hunt*, wherein a hunter, habited in red and mounted on a white horse, is touched with a force that is quite astonishing, and in a freer manner than is usually the style of Philip Wouwerman. I ascribe its unsullied freshness to its having escaped the withering effects of varnish and scrubbing.

A saloon, containing several Rembrandts of a large size, forms a glorious *coup-d'œil*: and probably they appear to more advantage, having as a contrast, some infamous works of Ferdinand Bols; to which are ignorantly affixed marks, with the name of the great master of the Dutch school. A large picture by Rembrandt, of the *Prodigal Son's Return*, is in his usual style, rich but ungraceful; full of character, but not of the

epic mould, a *burgomaster's head* stares you in the face; and you stare at it in concert, with surprise, conviction, and astonishment; certain of its unequalled merit, and scarcely believing it to be a work of art.

A gallery, which is very long, is filled with pictures from various masters; namely, Claude Lorraine, Nicolas and Gasper Poussin, Vernet, Le Brun, Le Sueur, and many others.

Claude has productions here which are nature's self. He seems to have gained the summit of his art. But if, while we contemplate him with feelings bursting into enthusiasm, our eyes stray for a moment around, the admiration is divided; and we see other artists, in their different paths, keep even with the wheels of his chariot, as they mount the hill of fame.

The genius of the Flemish school is shewn in many excellent works of Rubens, Snyders and Vandyke. Several portraits of our ancestors, from the pencil of the latter, decorate the walls of the Hermitage. We here see the daughters of Charles I.; that monarch himself, in a suit of armour; Sir Thomas Wharton, besides many of the English nobility and statesmen. A *St. Sebastian* and the *Incredulity of St. Thomas*, are noble pictures from the same hand.

Rubens displays his old favourite subjects of Silenus, Tigers, and squabby Nymphs: a most abominable selection: and when we view the admirable richness and brightness of his colouring, how do we lament that so much talent should be thrown away upon the most disgusting objects in and out of nature.

Ruysdael presents us with a perfect cold and gloomy scene. Its principal object is a waterfall, so excellently executed as to seem literally

tumbling before you with all the effects of a cataract. It is not sublime; but it is unaffected, and true to its subject. The longer you observe its beauties, the more is your attention rivetted.

On the opposite side, in the same apartment, is a master-piece of Potter. A wood, with a man on horseback issuing from it. The sun shines through the trees and gleams partially on a rutty road. This is inimitable; and with the picture last mentioned, forms two of the best landscapes of this character, in the Hermitage. What David Teniers is in humble life, to the sublime scenes of Poussin and Salvator Rosa; so are Ruysdael and Potter to Claude Lorraine. One, is nature in her common dress; the other, when she puts on her epic garb. Both styles suit the genius of their respective masters.

Countless specimens of other artists are dispersed all over the palace; but passing by many very indifferent, and more that disgrace the walls, I have selected those only which are deemed worthy of the august patroness who formed the collection. Leaving you to con their merits, I shall now rest my pen, and bid you *adieu!*

LETTER VI.

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

BEING still on the Muses' highway, allow me to lead you across the Neva to one of its proudest ornaments, the Institution for the Encouragement of the Arts! The first idea of such a foundation was projected by the father of his country, the immortal Peter the Great. The Empress Elizabeth, in the year 1758, made many advances towards the fulfilment of his plan; but before the preliminary circumstances could be arranged, death put a period to her reign. The honour now fell to the lot of her successors: and the present extensive scale of the institution was designed and executed by the patriotic mind of the Great Catherine. In 1764, it was finished and fully endowed; receiving from its foundress, proper laws to regulate the whole.

The establishment consists of a president, three rectors, two assistant rectors; six professors of painting, sculpture, and architecture, with each an assistant, and one perpetual secretary. One inspector of the college, with his assistant; an adequate number of professors of perspective, anatomy, geography, history, mythology, and iconology: and a number, unlimited, of academicians; admitting artists of all nations to that honour.

This institution is formed to watch and assist the bent of genius from its infancy; and yet, out of the number which are taken in here, very few come forth good artists. The fault then must lie in the minds of the pupils, which seem altogether barren of that talent which parti-

cularly points towards painting. And where genius is not in some degree implanted by nature, I fear all the tuition in the world will never force it to any strength or beauty. Though this disappointing result is to be regretted, still the college is of incalculable service, as it instructs many (who would otherwise be ignorant) in the duties of a virtuous and useful citizen.

Sixty children are received at the age of five years; none above six. They must be free; and in the case of their being originally slaves, the nobleman to whom they belong, if he wishes to rear an architect, a sculptor, or a painter, and have him educated here, he must first accompany the child with a passport of his liberty. Every attention requisite for that tender age, is paid to the children; but when once they are registered in the college, it is impossible on any pretence, to draw them thence again, till the period of their pupillage is terminated. For the first three years, they are instructed in the duties of religion, taught their own and foreign languages, the rudiments of drawing, and the elements of architecture. From the age of nine till twelve they go deeper into these researches, with the addition of geography, history, and astronomy. From twelve till they reach their fifteenth year, they study mathematics, the principles of physics and natural history; and penetrate still farther into the mystery of the sciences. In each of the classes the genius of the youth is watched: and, should the instructors be men of discernment, much useless fatigue to themselves and their pupils might be saved, by observing in proper time the bias of the latter to any particular pursuit. Thus talents would not be thwarted by being thrust into contrary paths; and the ardor of the student would increase, as he found the obstacles removed which lay between him and his aim. Independent of every pains being taken to embellish these young men in all the accomplishments of education, lessons of piety and morals are most assiduously sown in their minds. The true source of the sublime in the arts, being laid in the mental greatness of the pro-

fessor, no labour is spared to render the pupils of this college as admirable in private conduct as they hope to be in public reputation. Must we not pause to admire so excellent a plan! How broad are the views on which it is founded! Not merely to teach youth to be artists, but to be men; to be useful citizens; to bless the country in which they were born; and to spread her glory with their own fame! Nay, not to stop even there; but in forming men to eternise their names here, it gives them a bright earnest of immortality hereafter. So far does the imperial eagle carry her sons! Nothing little, or contracted, is found in this munificent establishment. No care nor interruption arises to damp the ardour of the student; no ideas pervade his mind but those of improvement, emulation, and the prosecution of his favourite pursuit.

In order to estimate the progress of the growing geniuses, an examination, before the heads of the academy, takes place every six months. From the report of the masters, and specimens of the young people's particular efforts in the different departments of their study, a register is made of their conduct and abilities; and they are accordingly either praised for assiduity, or reprimanded for neglect. Rewards are distributed in the form of prints, &c. Having passed from the college into the academy of fine arts (which is considered as the last stage of their education), they are then carefully examined once every month, and their progress duly entered on the records of the school. As an incitement to emulation, medals of silver and gold are distributed, of various sizes and weights, according to the merit of the candidates. When the whole of their education, both in the college and in the academy, is completed, the assembly, or council, honours them with the gift of a sword, accompanied with an attestation of their freedom; in virtue of which they are authorised to exercise their profession wherever they may deem it proper. This foundation, like that of our own, sends a certain number of artists to study in those countries, which we regard as the

native seat of the arts. The term of their selection is every three years. Twelve is the number elected; and they are chosen out of the students who have already been distinguished with medals. When abroad, they keep a journal; and every four months, send the academy a regular account of their progress and occupations. At the expiration of a stated time they send to St. Petersburg specimens of their improvement, either a design of their own, or some excellent copy of a statue, picture, or building; after the reception of which, money is sent to enable them to return. From that period they cease to be pensioners of the academy; and are eligible to become members, or professors in the institution. All who leave this establishment without giving adequate proofs of genius, are placed out under respectable tradesmen and artisans.

In order to give you a just idea of the magnitude of this institution, you must remember that it embraces in the fullest extent of the several arts, architecture, sculpture, painting, casting in bronze, medals, and engraving in every branch, including gems. From the extent of the building you may imagine how noble are its schools. The finest models and drawings of every celebrated architectural relic, are here to be found. Casts of the most admired statues of antiquity are placed in large saloons; and for pictures, the precious gallery of the Hermitage is open to their study. A handsome chapel for the devotions of the students, is in the interior of the edifice; as is also a well-furnished and extensive library. Nothing is omitted as too minute, which can promote their improvement; or awaken the virtuous ambition of talents deserving distinction.

An annual exhibition of the works of the young artists is opened every July. Should I be in St. Petersburg in that month, I shall then be

able to form a pretty correct judgment of the growing state of all the arts in this metropolis; but at present I can only pronounce with any certainty upon sculpture and architecture; and they appear to me to be in a very promising state. The little I have seen of the students in painting, gives me an opposite impression; and that, when we consider the institutions of their academy, is rather inexplicable. I have several times passed through the apartments where the young men work, and, as an artist, minutely examined their performances; but in none of them could I discern the germs of the future painter. I sought to explain this to myself, and found one very efficient cause in the bad examples which are ever before their eyes; and which they copy, as the standards of perfection. The walls, instead of being enriched with a few excellent pictures, are disgraced with myriads of vile daubings by heaven knows who. Who are we to blame for this? Certainly not the imperial foundress, or her successors. The invaluable saloons of the Hermitage are ever open to the students of the academy. There they may study from morning until night; imbibing from the sublime works of Michael Angelo and Raphael, the very fountain of taste and improvement. These they neglect; or, rather I should say, the professors never introduce them to even a glimpse of such great originals. Why, I cannot pretend to tell you; but so it is: and thus, for want of the same plan which prevails in the schools of sculpture and architecture, the whole of the expence lavished on that of painting, is little better than absolutely wasted. Where manifest want of genius, and bad instructions are united, nothing but disappointment can be the result. Able teaching and industry may give respectable proficiency to the most moderate capacities; and it is as well known, that bad examples will corrupt and destroy the finest talents that ever were in man.

Before the architect and the sculptor are the best lessons. We see a

vast number of models in cork (done by the same artist who executed those in the British Museum), of the most perfect remains in ancient Rome; also an immense model of St. Peter's, finished with scrupulous exactness. Though far from maturity, no one who looks around this superb city, will say that architecture is in its infancy: the Kazan church, and other public buildings, being all from the designs of Russian artists. But sculpture seems to me to have even been more rapid in her advances.

Many are the students who have accomplished pieces of admirable workmanship; but the academy has to boast of one that might be regarded with honour by any nation. Mr. Martauze. He is indebted to the institution at St. Petersburg for his early education; for its perfection, is obliged to Italy and his own genius. He has produced an Acteon that would grace the most classic ages; and several funeral monuments of equal merit and Grecian taste. This gentleman has studied the beauties of ancient sculpture with the best disciplined judgment. He has not permitted his admiration of their graces to deceive him in their defects. With the nicest discrimination he has drawn the delicate line between them; and exemplifies by his own performances, that a statue may possess all the simplicity which is the characteristic of the best antiques, without falling into those stiffnesses and unnatural peculiarities which some mistake for perfections. His professional engagements at present are numerous: but his work of the greatest promise, is a colossal statue of John the Baptist. It is about fifteen feet high; is to be cast in bronze; and placed, with many others executed by the same hand, on the exterior of the new metropolitan church. The design possesses all the divine majesty and power of action so eminently conspicuous in the character of the great prophet. Indeed I look on every work of this distinguished artist, with growing admiration: and I must say, that dis-

tinguished as similar talents are in England, we have not in that country a superior sculptor to Mr. Martauze.

While I am on this subject, I will present you at the Taurida Palace; not to emperors and princes, but to some of the finest specimens of antiquity which have been preserved. This noble mansion was once the residence of the magnificent Potemkin; and in it he gave that entertainment to his imperial mistress, so celebrated for costliness and eastern grandeur.

The statues are now its most attractive ornament. And a most invaluable one is that of a Venus, given to Peter the Great by the then coeval Pope. The Medicean Venus, the standard of perfection in female form, does not, in many points (if I dare make the assertion!), surpass this of the Taurida. The attitude of both is similar; but that of the one I am now studying, possesses the most graceful *tournure* imaginable, united with a symmetry of form, and majesty of mien not to be described: and with all this, there is a lightness, a breathing action throughout the figure which the de Medici never knew. That, also glorious, proof of human genius, seems in a fixed, and rather painful position; particularly when viewing it in profile: and likewise impresses you with a heavy *tout ensemble* in the lower extremities. The Tauridcan Venus has here the advantage: her legs and feet are exquisitely proportioned; so much elegance, such delicacy and soft flow of line, so much refined and natural beauty, I never before gazed upon. The body is that of the most perfect outline of a lovely woman: its gradual stealing undulations, impart such enchantment to the eye in dwelling on its form, that it is only the want of colour which dissolves the illusion, and reminds you that it does not exist. So far it excels the Venus de Medici; and as a whole is certainly the most pleasing: but there are parts where that "beauteous statue" again gains her ascendancy. The

head and neck of the Tauridean are evidently too small; and yet the same inimitable grace which charms in the figure, pervades these also. The original arms are lost; and those substituted in their stead are so vile, that it is a disgrace to the palace in which the statue stands; and, as long as they are endured, a memento of the infamy of the artist who had the impudence so wretchedly to attempt their restoration. The effect is so bad, from their enormous disproportion, that many might pass this beautiful specimen of antiquity as a thing unworthy of notice. I measured the height of both Venuses, and found the Tauridean was taller than the Medicean by two inches. Do not fancy from this comparison, that the Venus which has been so long the object of our joint admiration, is fallen in my esteem. Far from it: I do not think her less beautiful; though I may consider her rival as more so. And yet I am not presuming enough to guide your taste on this subject; or, indeed, that of any other person. But perhaps it will be a support to my opinion, when I tell you that Mr. Martauze, the justly celebrated Russian sculptor, regards this statue with an admiration equally enthusiastic as my own. However, your eyes shall be your judge; as I intend to bring a cast of it to England, and present it as a mark of my respect to the Royal Academy at Somerset House.* It will be an acquisition to the student, and a great ornament to the antique school. The preservation of the original is not good: the marble is discoloured, and partially worn by time. The head has also suffered; but not sufficient materially to injure the loveliness and divine expression which reigns throughout.

The next relic of antiquity to which I would call your attention, is a colossal head of Achilles. It is heroically grand; possessing all the godlike qualities and manly beauties attributed to him by Homer. Nay, it even surpasses the idea of that immortal poet; for when we look on

* The circumstances under which the author left Russia, obliged him to leave this cast with others at St. Petersburg.

the heavenly greatness of this countenance, we deem it impossible that the mind which informed it, could be wrought to such a hurry of revenge and its brutal execution, as was wreaked upon the body of the brave and lifeless Hector. It wears a splendid casque with a high and superb crest. This bust is now removed, and placed in the Hermitage. I know not whether they have a cast of it in England; but at all events I shall bring one with the other of the Venus.

The second ornament of the Taurida Palace is a figure of Hercules, holding a club in his left hand, and the Hesperian fruit in his right. The head and body, as well as the right thigh, are perfect; and the rest admirably restored. It differs totally from the Farnese god; and though not above seven feet high, what remains of the original, proves it to have been the work of the most glorious era of Greece. The head is crowned with a wreath; perhaps a branch from the Hesperian tree, as an additional badge of his victory.

As you read this account of the classic treasures of Russia, you will perhaps fancy, that if I improve by such models, as much as I blame those who do not, I shall return to England a modern Apelles! We need not be ashamed of the ambition that points at excellence; hence I avow mine, and assure you that with me, such advantages shall not be cast on a barren soil. At present, I have drawn more fire than frost from this northern atmosphere; and I hope my pencil will discover it to your eyes, when we meet.

The vast apartment in which the relics I have just described are placed, is well portrayed by Carr; and his little sketch gives a just idea of its appearance.

Before you enter the hall, or gallery of the palace, you pass through a saloon of great magnitude, which is supported by immense white pil-

lars, and ornamented with ancient candalabrams, sarcophaguses, busts, vases, and other decorations of the classic ages. With these admirable specimens of departed genius, are mingled the monstrous associates of modern ill-fashioned cupids, negroes, fantastic heads, and hideous whirligigged pedestals of fifty-coloured marbles. My disgust at this sight, can only be compared to your sensations, should a groupe of asses burst in with their horrid brayings, amidst the soul-entrancing sounds of spheric harmony.

On leaving this enormous vestibule, the hall opens at once upon the eye, and excites an emotion which must be felt to be imagined; to describe it is beyond my powers. I had not an opportunity of measuring this apparently measureless place, and therefore will not pretend to guess at its dimensions. A double range of Ionic columns, rises like a forest on either side; and when you look up to their capitals, the height is so great as almost to pain the eye. But there, the sublimity of this gigantic chamber ceases. A poverty-stricken, flat ceiling, with little insignificant urns in a squeezed shape, finish most abruptly, what might otherwise have been perfection. Had it been arched, the effect would have been unequalled in Europe. Between the pillars are placed statues; most of them modern and of indifferent merit. Some fine imitations of the Barbarinii and other celebrated vases, are mixed with them; and at each end of the gallery, at some distance from the wall, are two excellent copies of the Laocoon and Cleopatra.

Through the long avenue of columns, is opened to your view a most delightful scene. A spot dedicated to perpetual summer. Here all the sweets of Arabia, mingling with European taste, woo the senses to an exhaustless banquet. In this garden, the frigid airs of winter never breathe: all is warmth and balmy softness. Trees, fruits, and flowers,

fill up the fragrant assemblage, and court you into walks winding through many a luxuriant maze of oranges, myrtles, and clustering vines. Whilst straying in so delicious an atmosphere, and surrounded by the foliage of a hundred groves, flowers springing at your feet, and scenting a perfume which takes the captive soul and laps it in *Elysium*, how are the senses dissolved ! It seems the power of enchantment ; as if we were lost in Armida's garden, and there forgot every thing but pleasure and repose. On emerging from this earthly paradise, like leaves of the sensitive plant, the feelings are driven back upon themselves. For a few moments you cannot guess the cause : but looking round, the pale face of winter and its bleak attendants, lifeless trees, and drifting snows, soon explain the mystery, and account for the surprise.

During the short summer of this country, the pleasure-grounds which surround the palace, wear a very charming appearance. They are laid out in the English style ; having extensive shrubberies, romantic walks, rustic retreats, hot-houses, and conservatories, as well as every other feature in a British garden. For these beauties, the imperial family are indebted to the taste and exertions of Mr. Gould, an Englishman, who has long resided in St. Petersburg ; and who plans and superintends all its most distinguished works of this nature. He is the Repton of Russia. His true English honesty, excellent heart, and hospitality, claim the esteem of all ranks ; and add a still firmer decision to that respect for the British character already awarded to it by the generous admiration of the Russian empire. Here, the word of an Englishman is held as sacred as the bond of any other foreigner : and the veneration which the people pay to the nation at large, is most emphatically proved by the friendship they evince to every subject of Britain who lands on their shores. Cold I may have felt this country, but never the hearts of its inhabitants to your affectionate friend.

LETTER VII.

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

IN a letter I received sometime ago, you desired me not to omit seeing the church of Saint Alexander Nefsky. I have obeyed you; and beg you to accompany me through its consecrated aisles. All that we see in this city which is interesting, must excite our veneration from circumstance, not age. Not a stone of its present fabric was laid, much more than a century ago: so, as I cannot speak, either of the antiquity, or peculiar grandeur of this shrine to the illustrious Saint, I will first awaken your interest in giving you a little sketch of his character.

He flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century, not bearing the title of Tzar of Russia, but that of Prince of Novgorod. The desolation of the Russian empire, brought on by the victories and ravages of the Tartars, prompted its neighbours to seek a share in the spoil. But Alexander, to whom his father Yaroslaf had resigned the government of Novgorod, met a formidable army of invading Danes on the banks of the Neva. He encountered them; and not only drove them off the field with great slaughter, but compelled the fugitives to make a hasty retreat into their own country. From this signal victory, he obtained the surname of Nefsky. Returning a conqueror to Novgorod, instead of being welcomed with plaudits, jealousy and suspicions surrounded him. Fearing that his high fame should incline him to stretch his prerogative and injure their liberties, the citizens caballed amongst themselves how to limit his present power, and finding that im-

practicable, most ungratefully rose in open rebellion. Alexander was forced to retire ; and full of indignation, applied to his father, who had assumed the government of Vladimir. The venerable Prince assigned to him the jurisdiction of Perciaslavl, and sent another of his sons to Novgorod. But no sooner had Alexander withdrawn, than they found the palladium of their safety had departed with him. The Danes being apprised of what had happened, raised new levies, and pouring in upon Novgorod, attacked the city with great fury. The new Prince was not successful in his attempts to check the enemy ; and the people in despair, sent a deputation to the dauntless Alexander, to implore his forgiveness, and petition for his return. Their treason could not be so easily forgotten ; and the ambassadors brought back a refusal. Entreaties were sent a second time, with the Archbishop at their head ; upon which great humility Alexander complied ; relieved the besieged city of Novgorod ; and not only repulsed the enemy, but even pushed on to Livonia, and gained a decisive victory over the Germans, Danes, and Tchudes, on the borders of the Peipus lake. The fame of these new exploits of the heroic Prince soon reached the ears of the Tartar Khan, who was then, in some measure, the dictator of all the principalities of Russia. When Alexander's father the Grand-Prince Yaroslaf was dead, the Khan invited the young warrior to the horde ; and there, as he had before honoured Yaroslaf, created him Grand-Prince of Russia, and caused him to mount the throne in the great city of Vladimir. Secure of the friendship of the Khan, he now turned all his thoughts towards clearing his country of the neighbouring ravagers ; with a great force he undertook an expedition against Sweden, and happily acquired new laurels in every step he marched, and returned to his country laden with spoils and glory. Meanwhile the rest of the Princes of this vast empire, each in his separate territory finding himself oppressed by the idea of bearing

any other yoke than his own will, resolved to unite and make a general attack upon the Tartars. The Khan hearing of this plot before it was ripe, sent to all these Princes to attend him immediately at the horde, saying he required their assistance in a matter of great consequence. It was easily perceived that this was only a feint to deprive the principalities of their sovereigns, and so render them more entirely under the subjection of the Khan. The Princes, therefore, all refused; but Alexander apprehending dire consequences from such obstinacy, and relying on the friendship of the Khan for himself, conceived the adventurous resolution of repairing quite alone to the horde; and there, by prudent submission appease the aroused anger of their chief. He resolved to make the dangerous attempt: and should even the Khan's vengeance make him the victim of his wrath, provided it might end there, he would be happy so to expiate the crime of his rash country. This patriotic Prince was obliged to remain a full year amongst the Tartars, before he could appease the indignation of the Khan. At length, after many an unsuccessful application, he received the act of amnesty from the offended chief; and was allowed to return into Russia to inform the Princes that all was forgiven. But whether the Khan repented of his clemency, or the jealousy of the Tartar Princes had prepared his fate, cannot be ascertained at this period, but it is well known that he died of poison long before he reached his own principality.

His life having been passed in deeds of arms and of piety, his memory was regarded with veneration; and enthusiasm reported that a number of miracles had been wrought at his tomb. On this he was canonized: and Peter the First, in order to hallow his new city in the minds of the people, brought the remains of the sainted hero to a shrine within it, over which he erected the church consecrated to his name. There is an order of knighthood instituted to the honour of Alexander, which

is so highly respected as to be borne by several of the sovereigns who have been allies with Russia.

The monastery which boasts the patronage of this illustrious Saint, is inhabited by sixty monks; whose ways, I fancy, are not a tittle more active or useful than those of their brethren in other countries. Never having passed under the temptations of busy life, perhaps they think that escaping the sins of the world is equivalent to doing good in it; and so they linger out their earthly pilgrimage, more like drones than members of the church militant. They are of the order of St. Basil; as indeed are most of the *religieuse* of this empire.

The quadrangles and long-stretching walls proclaim the extent of the building. It is large without being grand, and possesses no true architectural ornament whatever. The sides are gaily painted with red and yellow in arches and pillars; a taste that was early prevalent in Russian cities. Strange as such a fancy appears to us, I have no doubt of its being a relief to the eye during the long season of a northern winter, when every object is cloathed in one mass of white for so many months. The edifice dedicated to the Saint, stands high amid the surrounding depths of clumsy buildings. It is of a peculiar architecture, composed of the Tartarian and Greek styles; finely gilded, and as usual most gorgeously painted. The inside is in the same *gusto*, and a few bad copies of Italian pictures cover its walls. Their subjects are, a portrait of Peter the Great, and the achievements of Saint Alexander. The shrine of the hero is of massive silver, constructed of piles of military trophies and religious devices, rising to an immense height. A sort of sarcophagus, covered with a rich gold and jewelled pall, silver candelabrams, and well arranged relics from the Holy Land, form the decorations of this spot; presenting a most magnificent and striking spectacle. I never have seen

any thing resemble it in wealth, excepting the silver chamber in the palace at Berlin; which, by the way, has since been told me, is merely show and a substitute for the reality. Frederic the Great, during the seven years war, converted the largest part of this metal into dollars; leaving wooden models of the original treasure, slightly silvered, as a deceiving representative of what once had been. Until you are told of the cheat, the imitation is so well effected, that on a merely passing view it is impossible to discover the difference.

On one side of the church, being a most solemn contrast to the imperial shrine, lie the remains of a bishop, covered with a dark canopy of crimson velvet. A gold cross is embroidered on the centre of the pall, which is spread over the coffin. Relics and golden candlesticks are also dedicated to the departed; and the whole forms a gloom truly impressive and sepulchral.

By giving you a description of the interior of this church, you may have a just idea of every other in the empire, as they are all fitted up according to one design.

The entrance is generally through a portico, by a pair of large folding doors. These lead to the main body of the building, which is a clear expanse; excepting the columns only, which support the roof or dome. No seats of any description are admitted. Every individual stands during divine service, occasionally altering the position to kneeling or touching the ground with the head, according to the prescribed sacred ceremonies. About ten yards from the entrance, and directly in a line with it, is the sanctum sanctorum. It is elevated on several steps which are covered with a rich carpet, and only trodden by the holy feet of the priesthood. This inner temple is divided from the outer

space, wherein the congregation assemble to their devotions, by a high screen magnificently carved and gilded, with compartments containing paintings from the New Testament and the legends of modern Saints. In general these pictures are very miserable; none but professors of the Greek church being allowed to decorate the churches: and you already have my opinion of the state of this branch of the arts in Russia. In the centre of the screen is a folding door of bronze fret-work, in which is variously represented the Holy Ghost with the other Divine Persons; and through it may be seen the altar, its holy chalice, crucifix and bible; all superbly jewelled and hung with gold fringe. Every church has this inner chapel, so similar to the *Holy of Holies* in the ancient ritual of Jerusalem; and from which, according to the arrangement of the Greek ceremonies, on hallowed days the priests issue, and with much solemnity, perform divers sacred functions. There is something very impressive in the whole of this service. When the splendid habits, like the costly decorations of Aaron, and the venerable figures of the priests appear; while we observe the devotion of all around; a peculiar emotion seizes the soul impossible to describe. In the boors we see a simple and devout ardor: they pray and cross themselves with an earnestness that is truly gratifying. At the moment, we conceive the most favorable sentiments of them; for however ignorant men may be in other respects, when once they know the nature of the Almighty Being, and are sensible of standing before his omniscient eye, a salutary awe fills their minds; and integrity is as naturally its growth, as the corn is from the ground in which the seed has been sown. The more elevated ranks are not so religiously attentive as these humble rustics: during divine service they hold conversations with each other, at the same instant they are making the sacred signs on their persons with the two fore-fingers of the left hand. The music is fine, has much simplicity, and is all vocal. They who chant are not seen, which gives a more charming

effect to the voices. The sight of figures and faces, often not in harmony with the strains they produce, excites a discordancy in the feelings, very inimical to those holy aspirations, which, accompanying the sacred breathings of the voice, raise the soul in rapture to heaven. The most celebrated church in St. Petersburg, for fine singing, is the Maltese chapel; and there it is of the most exquisite melodies.

On entering the monastery of Alexander Nefsky, you see a small church on one side of the way leading to the grand area. It is vaulted and gloomy, and well informs the traveller that it is the mansion of the dead. Here are several cells in which are the tombs of departed great men. These monuments are in general badly executed; one only I can except, and that is of bronze, and composed and finished in a very superior manner. I could not learn the name of the artist.

The primary object of my visit to this sepulchral abode, was a desire to see the grave of the renowned Suwarroff. About four feet from the pavement, on the left hand side of one of these vaults, which is used as a chapel, is placed against the wall a small brass plate, on which is engraved in the Russ language,

HERE LIES SUWARROFF!

A more comprehensive epitaph could not have been chosen. On these words meeting the eye, his greatness and extraordinary life rush at once upon the mind; and we feel, from this sublime appeal, the whole force of his character with a conviction which a thousand volumes of eulogy could not increase nor more confirm. Many instances might be brought to shew how happy the Russians are in this kind of short, natural, and Spartan expression. On a medal, struck in the reign of Catherine II.,

in honour of a great victory, and presented to the officers and soldiers who distinguished themselves in the battle, this was written under the emblems of conquest, *I WAS THERE*. The sense of which is more pointed in the Russian tongue, it being there expressed in one word. The simplicity of this style is great as the empire, and strikes like its own gigantic rocks. Polish it with the refinements of art, and though ornament may be acquired, its sublimity would be lost. Such a mode of speech proves a certain grandeur in the minds of the people. Greatness is perceived at once; and like faithful mirrors reflecting what is before them, they pronounce the merit full, and in a word. What men easily feel and readily admire, they are not far from imitating.

In the vaulted apartments of this dreary structure, are stoves, in order to heat them; an accommodation which would gladly be dispensed with, as the penetrating vapour puts every dormant smell on the alert, filling the air with scents, musty and pestiferous, exhaled from the mouldering coffins of embalmed heroes, princes, and statesmen. In one of these sepulchres was formerly deposited the body of the unfortunate Peter III. the father of the late Emperor. When Paul ascended the throne he caused the remains of this imperial victim to be taken up, in order to be re-buried in the church of the fortress, the cemetery of his ancestors. The perpetrators of the murder were summoned to the ceremony, and obliged to watch the coffin day and night for three weeks. There were not more than two penitents (if penitents they were!) as the rest of the assassins were all dead. I do not envy the feelings which must, in these moments have occupied their breasts. Horror of their crime, and fear of immediate death after the funeral, must have been ever before them. Indeed, if time, or hardness of heart, had not blunted their remorse, the present punishment was a torture

more grievous than the most instantaneous public execution. They walked in the procession as chief mourners; a situation neither of them expected, after a lapse of so many years, to fill. There is something extraordinary and great in the mode of punishment; and also much to be admired in so strong a testimony of Paul's affection for the memory of his father. But there are many who do not give his heart any credit for this transaction; considering it rather as an act of hostility against the name of his mother. If they be right, the complexion of the affair is totally changed; and what before stood as an act of filial piety, is now abhorred as the violent caprice of an undutiful son. What supports this opinion, are the proofs he gave at different times of hatred to her memory, in the total disregard of all her public plans, and the disgrace in which he involved her best ministers.

This Prince's actions are too well known, and have sufficiently marked his extravagant character, to require my enlarging on them here. The people groaned beneath his yoke; and few, if any tears followed him to his grave. How different is the aspect of the nation and its Sovereign at this moment! Individual safety and comfort are seen on every side. The real good of the subject in the Monarch's breast, and the firmest confidence in him on the part of the people, form the peace and security of all. A heart like that of the amiable Alexander, when guided by wise counsels, cannot fail to render himself and the millions under his rule, prosperous and happy. He is now absent from his capital; but not on a party of summer pleasure. He is gone to front the enemy of Europe; and we have little doubt but that, if he be properly supported by his allies; he will make that far-stretching conqueror confess the might that lies in a righteous cause. Did we live in the days of superstition, we should suppose, from the wonderful fortune which attends this

scourge, that he fought under an enchanted banner ; but there is a period when success must fail the man who makes his glory the desolation of mankind. Interest and self-preservation are strong incitements ; they will be generally felt, and ere long he must be destroyed by those very evils recoiling on himself with which his rapacity and ambition have sought to overwhelm the world. But, as he is, men look on him with wonder ; and his most mortal foes must declare that were he as good as he is great, he would be irresistible. Doubly great must he be who ever makes this extraordinary victor lower his crest, and acknowledge an equal, if not a superior. Alas ! that talents cannot see the noblest crown is virtue !

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

HAVING learned you so long amongst the aisles and cloisters of the church, it is just that I should lead you to the rest within; and having placed you at the foot of the altar open the book containing its holy ordinances.

The religion of Russia is that of the Eastern or Greek Church. It allows the most liberal toleration; no person being excluded from any office under government on account of his religious tenets. The only restrictions are, that the imperial family must profess the Greek faith; and all Russians who have once entered its pale cannot lawfully depart from it. As the church in question is of higher antiquity than any other distinction amongst Christians, so its doctrines prevail over some of the widest tracks in Christendom. They are professed through the greatest part of Greece, the Grecian Isles, Moldavia, Wallachia, Egypt, Nubia, Lybia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Cilicia, and Palestine, the whole of the Russian empire in Europe, Siberia in Asia, Astracan, Casan, Georgia, and several other countries.

The Princess Olga, grandmother to Vladimir the Great, was the first person of distinction in Russia who was converted to Christianity. She went to Constantinople to be baptised; and was led to the font by the eastern Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenneta, who gave her the name of Helen; and sent her back to her country laden with relics and costly

presents. Her son the fierce Sviatoslaf, refused to abjure his pagan gods; and Vladimir, her no less ferocious grandson, paid as little respect to her religious zeal. What parental anxiety could not effect, in the course of a few years afterwards was so ably compassed, as to cause the Prince not only to become a convert himself, but to accomplish the holy conviction of the most considerable families in the empire. He too received the seal of the Cross before the altars of Constantinople; and from thence, with a Christian bride, the sister of the Emperor, brought priests and learned teachers to instruct the whole nation in the doctrines of the Greek church. Thus was one of the most sanguinary worshippers of idolatry transformed at once by the religion of peace, into a powerful but mild assertor of the charities of Heaven. Mark how strong is the difference between Vladimir pagan and Vladimir christian. In the early part of his sway, while as Grand-Prince he was carrying conquest to the very extremities of Russia, he resolved to return thanks to the savage gods of his country for the victory granted to his arms, by sacrificing on their altars the prisoners whom he had taken during the war. His courtiers still more barbarous in their piety, were not content with the smoking blood of so many of their fellow-creatures, but they told Vladimir that a victim selected from amongst his own people would greatly enhance the homage paid to the propitious deities. He approved the hint, and pitched on a young man, the son of a venerable Christian, and professing the same faith. The unhappy father refused to yield up the victim. The Monarch, enraged at what he deemed sacrilege, and at his commands being disputed, ordered the doors of the house to be forced. He was obeyed; and the father and son furiously immolated in each other's arms. Not satisfied with this diabolical rite, Vladimir ordered the number of idols to be increased in the city of Kief; and erected a new and superb statue to the goddess Perune in the principa-

lity of Novgorod. Soon after those heathen acts a Greek sage appeared at his court ; and gaining his ear, in a very impressive manner so discoursed of the truth of the christian dispensation, reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, that the Monarch trembled, declared his faith in what he heard ; and following the holy man to the font, received the name of Basilus, and “ leaving in the sacred water the leprosy with which his vices had covered him, came forth a character as pure as infancy.” Indeed the change which took place in him from that hour, seems almost miraculous. He broke down the idols throughout the empire. He put away his wives and concubines, to the number of eight hundred, and adhered to the Princess Anna alone, the christian lady whom he had brought from Constantinople. He founded churches and schools ; built cities ; and drawing the famishing savages from their huts and wild pursuits, planted them in these new dwellings, under the tuition of holy men, and the protection of his choicest officers. Even his prisoners, instead of being sacrificed to bloody idols, were sent to people the wastes of his empire. Every way he conducted himself not only as a sovereign who consulted the prosperity of his country, but as one who considered all mankind as his brethren. On great festivals he entertained at his own cost the inhabitants of his capital : and to them who, from disease or infirmity, could not attend the public tables, he sent a plentiful repast to their own homes. But even in cases of blood, when we might have supposed that the sanguinary scenes to which he had so long been accustomed, must altogether have blunted his feelings of compassion, we find that here too the religion of mercy had penetrated his heart. Being one day called upon to pass sentence for the immediate execution of a notorious robber, he exclaimed with much emotion,

“ What am I, that I should condemn a fellow-creature to death ! ”

This sketch is sufficient to shew that the lessons of the Greek sage had not been barren. They not only converted the Prince, but by the mildness and wisdom of his reign (now that he had become christian) the people saw by the fruit that the tree was good; and in crowds they pressed towards the Cross to receive its mark, and express with their devotion, gratitude towards their leader. Vladimir died at Berestof in the year 1015; and was honoured with the testimony of canonization to his piety.

I must now give you some idea of the doctrine of the Greek church. But as it is not necessary to particularise those articles in which all established churches agree, such as the propitiation, redemption, resurrection, &c. &c. I shall mention none but distinguishing points; as they only can shew the difference between the Greek and other creeds. This church holds the doctrine of the Trinity, with the following variation from the common belief; namely that the Holy Ghost, instead of "proceeding from the Father and the Son," proceeds from "the Father only."

They admit the invocation of Saints upon a principle very refined, but sufficient, in their minds, to clear them from the charge of idolatry. Not as gods but as intercessors, they apply to these "spirits of the just made perfect;" asking their aid as powerful friends, rather than imploring their protection as almighty rulers. It is in this view that they invoke the Virgin, the Apostles, and other hallowed names which enrich the Greek calendar; offering up prayers and incense to them, in the like manner as men seek to propitiate the great of the earth by petitions and tributes of respect.

Pictures and images are used in the Greek church on a similar principle. No more than the last mentioned custom of paying homage to Saints, infringes the first commandment, will it be allowed that these

depictings of the divine persons break the second? They do not place the image or picture before the eyes of the congregation to be worshipped as the visible presence; but merely as a remembrancer, an awakener of the affections towards the heavenly beings of which they are similitudes. So far the explanation is good. There is nothing to be found fault with in the aim of the fathers who constituted these usages, but the means are dangerous. The enlightened mind understands the simplicity of Christianity, and takes the rites of the church as they were intended. Not so the ignorant boor: accustomed to examine things more by impressions on his senses, than with the touchstone of reason, he cannot long think that "power belongeth to God alone," when he is hourly on his knees to invoke the mediation of a Saint. And how can his soul continue to seek the invisible Father, when he finds his image in the temple, surrounded by prostrate devotees, and adorned with all the golden decorations of the most costly dedications? Removed from the presence of this graven deity, where does he think are the "eyes which are too pure to behold iniquity?" He has seen them closed up within the walls of some consecrated building; and fearless of observation, is ready to embrace the first temptation that crosses his path. The religion which is in spirit can alone happily affect the conduct of man. It strikes at the root of all evil, for it not only commands you to "cleanse the heart and not the garments," but assures you that God is neither confined to temple, earth, nor heaven, but pervades the whole universe; and with his all-seeing eye searcheth the depths of man. Viewing things in this light, is it requisite to have images of wood and of gold to remind us of the omnipresent and all gracious Providence!

There are seven mysteries, or sacraments, in the Greek church, viz. baptism, the chrism, (a rite peculiar to this church,) the eucharist, confession, ordination, marriage, and the holy oil.

There are no peculiarities in the doctrine attached to the baptism, though there are some particularities in its ceremonies, which I shall describe.

On the very day on which a woman becomes a mother, the priest goes to her chamber and offers up a holy thanksgiving for her and the child. On the eighth day the infant is carried to the church and receives its name; that of the Saint to which the day is dedicated, is given to the child, in addition to any other which the parents may have chosen. Two and thirty days after this, the purification of the mother is performed; a ceremony instituted in imitation of that of the Virgin Mary. Then follows a service not limited to any particular time, since it must depend on the progress which the young Christian has made in religious knowledge. It consists in renouncing the evil spirit; or, as we term it, the "devil and all his works."

Then succeeds the baptism itself, in which the professor practises the trine immersion. One immersion is of more modern date, and was first introduced in Spain; whence, on the authority of Pope Gregory the Great, it was spread throughout the Latin church. Aspersion is an antecedent usage; having been always adopted in cases of sickness, or danger of immediate dissolution; and being the easiest ceremony, is now generally practised in all Protestant countries.

The chrism or sacred unction is the next rite. It is considered as the sealing of the Holy Ghost; and answers to confirmation in the church of Rome. It immediately follows the immersion at baptism, when the priest anoints the child or proselyte on the principal parts of the body, with the sign of the cross. Seven days after the application of this consecrated unction, the votary goes through the ceremony of ablution;

and is now prepared for the concluding rite, called that of the tonsure. Simeon of Thessalonica gives us this explanation of the institution.

“ After the chrism, that is the holy unction, the hair of the person’s head is shorn in the form of the cross ; because he then has Christ for his head : and because it is proper to pray uncovered, as Paul teaches. The tonsure is also a sign or mark, being cut cross-ways, that all vain and superfluous thoughts are from that time to be cut off. For this reason monks are entirely shorn ; and it becometh a faithful christian to divorce himself from every thing superfluous and not absolutely necessary. Besides which, the hair is offered by the baptised person to Christ, as a sort of first-fruits, or the sacrifice of his body ; the hair being as it were the exhalation of the whole body : the chief priest therefore does not carelessly throw it away, but lays it apart in a sacred place.”

At the end of the baptism the priest usually ties a little cross of gold, or some other precious material, round the infant’s neck. But this is not an ordinance of the church, though generally practised. It is a voluntary act of the parents or minister ; and meant to be a memorial only, to the child, of the spiritual cross he has now assumed.

It hath been well said that they who adopt opinions without reason, and against reason, cannot be cured by argument ; and besides, as I am not a divine, I shall make no remark on faith in transubstantiation. It is the declared belief of the present Greek church ; having been insinuated into its originally comparative simplicity, by the subtilty of Peter Mogilas, metropolitan of the Ukraine. He drew his notions from the schools established by Gregory the Fifteenth at Rome ; whence he returned, to propagate the new doctrine throughout the Russian empire. In the preparation of the eucharist, warm water is mixed with the wine. Laymen

receive the bread sopped in the cup. Rather a strange usage ! as it seems to class them with the deceiver Judas, who was the only one of the Apostles to whom Jesus gave the sop.

“—— and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot; and after the sop, Satan entered into him.” St. John, chap. 13, verses 26, 27.

The clergy take the elements separate.

Predestination is an article of the Greek church : and its writers defend the principle on the prescience of the divine nature.

Prayers for the dead are admitted. But not from any idea of purgatory, or dogmatical notions of the state of their souls. Hence it may be considered more as a tribute of tenderness towards the departed friend, and an awful reminder of our own mortality, than any established rite. On similar grounds regard is paid to the relics of holy persons : but, as in the case of images, the original sentiment is too frequently lost in blind superstition. Supererogation, indulgences and dispensations, are utterly disallowed in this church. And as it does not, like the Romish, assume infallibility, we cannot be surprised at the religious toleration dispensed by a sovereign professing its doctrines.

A work, written by Peter Mogilas, will give you a tolerably just idea of the Russian creed on religious and moral practice. You may find it in Greek or Latin : it is entitled “A confession of the catholic and apostolic faith of the Greeks and Russians ;” and divided into parts. It mentions that the commands of the church are nine. Attendance on public worship ; observance of the four great fasts ; venerating consecrated persons ; auricular confession ; not to read heretical books ; to pray for

the supreme powers spiritual and temporal, and for the conversion of unbelievers ; to observe the fasts appointed by the fathers, not to embezzle the property of the church, and not to marry during a fast. It inculcates that the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, piety, and awe of God. The three sins against the Holy Ghost are presumption, despair, and heresy. And the seven deadly sins are thus numbered ; pride, covetousness, fornication, envy, gluttony, revenge, and sloth. The four sins against which vengeance even on earth is denounced, are murder, sodomy, oppressing the widow and orphan, and depriving the labourer of his hire. The seven charities to the bodies of men, are, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, relieving prisoners, visiting the sick, receiving strangers, and burying the dead. To these are to be added seven charities to their souls ; converting the sinner, teaching the ignorant, giving counsel to those who require it, praying for our neighbours, being patient under injuries, and forgiving our enemies.

Confession is one of the seven sacraments of the Greek church. But so different is its principle from what is understood to be that of the Latin, that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of repeating an observation of Dr. Covel's, and copying a sketch of the *spiritual regulations* which are delivered to the priests on this head.

The ancient Greek church (remarks the good Doctor) commanded her penitents to confess their sins in secret to God alone ; and bade them consult their priest, only in what was needful to restore in them the *spirit of meekness*. The church of Rome commands confession to be particularly made to a priest, merely to erect a tribunal for him ; and to assert by him the mighty power of the church to pardon sins. The end

of the Greek is purely the amendment of the penitent ; that of the Latin, to magnify the glory of the priest. In the one church the confessors pretend no further than to abate or remit the penance, declaring the pardon comes from God alone. In the other, the priesthood assumes the full power to remit or pardon at pleasure. Thus far Covel. And now judge how just is his encomium on this part of the Greek opinions.

The spiritual regulation declares that “ it is the duty of priests at the confession of penitents to deter and subdue the pride of such as they observe to be stubborn and unrelenting, with the threats of the judgments of God ; and to comfort and support with the hope of his grace and mercy, the dejected and penitent. They should therefore understand how to instruct a sinner to break off his evil habits ; how to visit and solace the sick ; how, with the word of exhortation, to animate and convoy a dying person in his passage out of this world ; how especially to confirm sinners condemned here, in the hopes of divine mercy hereafter. The priest must not treat with insolence those who come to him for ghostly advice ; he is not to shew himself morose towards the penitent, whom he ought to exhort with mildness ; nor at any time to ask a present of his spiritual sons ; nor is he upon any provocation to reveal their confessions. But if a man discover at confession an intended robbery which he has not yet committed ; treason against his sovereign or the government ; and while he speaks shews no signs of remorse, but rather a design to fulfil his wickedness, and betray the confessor into connivance with the deed ; then the spiritual father must require him in the name of God to desist wholly from his evil purpose ; and if by a sullen silence, or an attempt to justify himself, he appear inflexible, the spiritual father must withhold all remission of a sin so persisted in, and lodge an information against him with the officers of justice. In the same manner he must reveal the cheats of any impostor

who has invented miracles and lying wonders to delude the people. The confessor has the power to enlarge or lessen the time or degree of spiritual punishment, or to exchange one penance for another, as a fast for an alms; provided, under the pretence of alms, the priest does not want a donation to himself, or to some other person not truly necessitous. He must take care to impose no penalties which are impracticable; but such as the penitents are capable of performing, and such as are proportioned to their abilities and situation; by reflecting what kind of penance may reasonably be inflicted on a soldier upon duty, an indigent traveller on the road, a sailor at sea, a beggar, a sick man, and the like. After he has sufficiently restrained the penitents by the denunciations of God, and they declare their contrition, and determination to lead a new life, he may, in the name of the Redeemer of mankind, pronounce their pardon, and admit them to a participation of the holy sacraments." Hence we may infer that sorrow for sin, confession, and absolution, constitute this mystery in the Greek church; in which we see penance does not make a necessary part; the one thing needful, being true repentance. I shall terminate my account of this rite with three specimens of the service, from Dr. King's translation of the Greek liturgies. His observations have been excellent guides to me; and by referring you to his learned work for a complete and nice knowledge of the ritual now under my pen, I propose a pleasure to you, and have one myself in avowing my obligation. The examples I have selected are the exhortation of the priest to the penitent. His prayer to God for pardon, and his absolution through Christ.

EXHORTATION.

Behold my child! Christ is invisibly present to receive thy confession. Be not ashamed, therefore, nor afraid; and conceal nothing from me: but without equivocation tell me whatsoever thou hast done,

that thou mayst receive forgiveness from our Lord Jesus Christ. Behold his image before us: I am only a witness to testify before him whatever thou shalt say to me: but if thou concealest any thing from me, thou shalt have double sin. Attend, therefore, since thou art come for medicine, that thou goest not away unhealed. Begin to amend thy life by God's help, and return not to thy former sins; for Christians ought to be true and just in all their dealings. To which end, may God grant you his grace!

PRAYER.

O God our Saviour, who by thy prophet Nathan didst declare thy forgiveness to David, when he repented of his sins; and didst receive the repenting prayer of Manasseh; accept with thy wonted compassion this thy servant, who repenteth him of his sins; and overlook whatsoever he hath committed, O thou whose property it is to forgive iniquities, and to pass over transgressions! For thou Lord hast said, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live! And thou dost forgive offences even until seventy times seven. Thy mercy is infinite, as thy goodness is incomprehensible. If thou shouldest be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who could abide it? For thou art the God of penitents; and to thee we offer up our praise, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, now and for ever, even unto all eternity.

ABSOLUTION.

May Jesus Christ our Lord God, through his grace, bounty, and love to mankind, forgive thee, my child, all thy sins! Amen.

At the end of the absolution, the priest signs him with the cross, and the penitent kissing the holy gospels and the crucifix, departs.

Having brought you to confession, I will now leave you to reflect on 'so solemn a rite; promising that when you next see my hand it shall be to lead you to the altar; not to your own espousals, but to be a witness of the awful ceremony used in Russia to tie the Gordian knot of weal or woe. Meanwhile, farewell.

LETTER IX.

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

THE matrimonial service in the Greek church need only be seen, to establish in your mind the conviction of its antiquity. At every step you recognize a few of the Jewish rites, mingled with many ceremonies which the ancient Romans borrowed from Greece. The hymeneal torch, chaplets of roses, the sacred cup and veil, all are here. How long the service has borne its present form in Russia, deeper antiquarians than I am must determine; but certainly these are evident traces of its pagan origin. Nor was it unnatural, nor indeed blameable, in the early proselytes to Christianity, though they ceased to invoke Venus, Hymen, and Juno, at their nuptials, yet to retain the innocent emblems of the pure flame of connubial love; and of those joys, blooming like flowers; and which would leave a sweet remembrance, like the still balmy fragrance of their fading garlands.

The ceremonies of the Greek marriage are three. They were formerly celebrated as distinct offices, at certain intervals of time; but now they are usually passed through at once.

The first office is called that of *the espousals* or *betrothing*. The parties pledge themselves to be true to each other by the interchange of rings. Anciently the man received a gold one, and the woman a silver; but now both rings are gold. The priest before whom the vows are made presents lighted tapers to the contracting pair; which answer to the nuptial torch of the heathens, and must mean the same. The ceremony takes place in the church, and usually in the evening. The liturgy being said, the priest standing within the nave (or as the Russians call it, the *trapeza*), places the parties who come to be betrothed before the door

which leads into the sanctuary (or, as we denominate it, the choir). Two rings are laid on the holy table. The priest makes the sign of the cross three times upon the heads of the couple, and then touching their foreheads with the lighted tapers, presents one to each. The benediction immediately follows, and a few short prayers, ending with —

“ O Lord our God, who from among the Gentiles didst espouse thy church as a chaste Virgin, bless these espousals, and join and preserve these thy servants in peace and concord —”

The priest then takes the rings, and gives one to the man and the other to the woman, saying —

“ The servant of God is betrothed to the handmaid of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, now and for ever; even unto ages of ages.”

Repeating this to each of them thrice, he signs them on the forehead with the rings, and puts them on the fore-finger of the right hand of each. The espoused couple then exchange their rings; and the priest dismisses them with a long and beautiful prayer, wherein he remarks on the holy betrothment of Rebecca to Isaac, when the servant of Abraham, after travelling into a far country to seek a bride for his master's son, met with her, and as a pledge of her future nuptials put upon her hand a gold ring.

The second rite, which is properly the marriage, is called the *matrimonial coronation*, from the circumstance of crowning the bride and bridegroom. This is done to denote their triumph over all irregular desires; and from an idea that all is not quite so regular with those who enter into a second marriage, it is usually omitted at such nuptials. A third marriage is deemed very scandalous; and a fourth, absolutely unlawful. Formerly the crowns were chaplets of flowers, but now they are generally of gold or silver, and often very elegantly embellished.

The parties having been betrothed, enter the sanctuary with lighted tapers in their hands; the priest preceding with the censer, and singing, along with the choiristers, the nuptial psalm, beginning with "Blessed are all they that fear the Lord."

He then addresses the bridegroom.

"Hast thou a good and unrestrained will and firm intention to take unto thee to wife this woman whom thou seest before thee?"

The man replies in the affirmative; and the same question is asked of the bride. On a similar response, the priest enquires whether they have before pledged their faith to any others; and being answered in the negative, he gives them the holy benediction: and proceeds with many fine prayers for their future happiness in each other, and virtuous lives. At the end of the third invocation the priest takes the crowns, and places one on the bridegroom's head, saying—

"The servant of God is crowned for the handmaid of God, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The other he puts on the bride's head with the same words; and repeats the benediction three times, saying—

"O Lord our God crown them with glory and honour. Thou hast put crowns of precious stones upon their heads! They asked of thee life, and thou gavest it to them; and thou wilt give them the blessing of eternal life: thou wilt make them glad with the joy of thy countenance."

Then is read Saint Paul's famous epistle on the duties of marriage. Several more prayers are said, and portions of scripture. The cup is brought, and blessed by the priest, who gives it thrice; first to the man and then to the woman. After which he takes them by the hand,

attended by the paranymphs (the bride-men and maids), in a procession round a circular spot, three times, turning from west to east. Then taking off the bridegroom's crown, he says —

“ Be thou magnified ; O bridegroom ! as Abraham. Be thou blessed as Isaac, and multiplied as Jacob ; walking in peace, and performing the commandments of God in righteousness ! ”

And taking off the bride's, he addresses her in a similar manner.

“ Be thou magnified, O bride ! as Sarah. Be thou joyful as Rebecca, and multiplied as Rachel ; delighting in thine own husband, and observing the bounds of the law according to the good pleasure of God ! ”

He concludes with the following prayer :

“ O God, our God, who wast present in Cana of Galilee, and didst give thy blessing to the marriage there, bless these thy servants, who by thy providence are joined in the fellowship of matrimony ; bless their going out and their coming in ; replenish their life with good things ; receive their crowns in thy kingdom ; preserve them undefiled, blameless, and free from snares, for ever and ever.”

The company then congratulate the parties, who salute each other ; and the priest gives the holy dismissal, which finishes the ceremony.

The third rite is that of *dissolving the crowns*. It takes place on the eighth day. The service is very short, containing little more than the following prayer ;

“ O Lord our God, who hast blessed the crown of the year, and hast appointed these crowns to be put on the heads of those who are joined together in the bonds of matrimony, thereby rewarding their continence, inasmuch as they are joined in the purity of wedlock according to thy

institution ; give thy blessing to this new-married couple at the dissolving of their crowns, and preserve their union undivided : that they may always give thanks unto thy name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, now and for ever, unto ages of ages."

After this, the bride may be conducted to the bridegroom's house ; they being now made one in heart, soul, and body — at least, such is the "consummation devoutly to be wished !"

On the perusal of the whole of this service, I prefer its principle before that used in the English church on the same occasion. Here, we do not meet with vows of an everlasting love ; a vow which is in no person's own power to keep. We may safely swear to esteem worth ; worth as naturally producing esteem, as the blossom the fruit. But love is a strange mystery, we can explain it only in part ; and we all know that none of us can command it to live or die at our pleasure. Hence, vows of truth and fidelity are all for which we can pledge ourselves ; and those are always in our power to keep, as every man may command his own moral actions. The Greek ritual goes no further ; all which we swear to do, in the church of England, being prayed for in that of Russia, to enable us to do. And besides, were the English marriage vows to be adhered to in all things, the redress, which the law holds forth to an injured wife or husband, would be impossible. Do not both parties swear before God, "to have taken each other to have and to hold from that day forward, for *better* for *worse*, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health *to love* and to cherish till death do them part?" Surely then, however, *worse* either party may become, all pleas of separation are stopped at the source. No ill-usage, no ill conduct, after such an engagement, can render lawful the putting away of the wife or husband. All these unreasonable pledges are avoided in the Greek ritual, and hence it interferes not with either the law of nature, or the law of the land.

Having dismissed a ceremony which leads to the *house of gladness*, I shall now change my subject and conduct you towards that of *mourning*. The wise man saith, "Blessed are they that enter therein, for the virtues are watered with tears!" I believe it is true. Afflictions make them strike root; and succeeding joys, like sun-beams, draw them up to luxuriance and usefulness. On the strength of this opinion I shall bring you to witness *the office of the holy oil*.

It is administered to the sick from the authority of this passage in St. James.

"Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Seven or three priests are sufficient to officiate at this ceremony, which is so far different from the Romish extreme unction, that it may be bestowed on any degree of illness; and is not held back as the last passport to the other world. This is meant to heal the sufferer, not to embalm him. I shall describe it as performed by seven priests, either in the church, or at the invalid's house.

A table being placed, a dish of wheat is set upon it, and upon the wheat an empty lamp is deposited to receive the holy oil, which is usually taken from the consecrated lamps before the image of Jesus; and having been there, it is considered as doubly hallowed. Seven small twigs (the number of the priests who are to use them), are bound together with a piece of cotton, and stuck in the wheat. The holy gospel is laid upon it; and a taper is given to each priest. Seven of them stand round the table. The first takes the center, and incenses the table in

every part; and also all the persons who are present. Then standing at the table, and looking towards the east, he blesses God and petitions for his mercy. Many prayers follow, addressed to the Father, the Son, and the Virgin, in which a blessing is invoked to accompany the application of the oil, and to heal the patient from his infirmities and from sins. The first priest then takes one of the twigs, and dipping it in the holy oil, anoints the sick person cross-ways on the forehead, the nostrils, the breasts, the mouth, the chest, and both sides of the hands; saying a long prayer addressed to the Divine Persons as almighty; and to the Saints as mediators. The second priest takes another twig and repeats the ceremony with other prayers; then in like manner, and with like invocations, follow the other priests until the seventh has finished. At this conclusion, the sick man, if he be able, stands or sits in the midst of the priests; but in case of his being too weak, they stand around his bed, and the first priest opening the gospel, with the letters downwards, places it upon the invalid's head. He then utters a prayer over it; and raising it again, presents it to the man to kiss. More invocations are added by all the priests, and the benediction is given in these words:

“Christ our true God, through the prayers of his most honourable mother, of his honourable and life-giving cross, of the holy glorious apostle James, first bishop of Jerusalem, and brother of all Saints, heal, pardon, and bless thee!”

The sick person bows his head and repeats, “Bless me a sinner!” after which the benediction is repeated; the priests depart, and he lays him down in peace.

It is remarkable that the ceremonies used at burying the dead are nearly the same with all people. Heathen, Jew, and Christian have similar rites, as if one voice dictated to all the religious observances due to the remains of our kindred mortals. On a man breathing his last in

Russia, the first office is to close his eyes and mouth; the next is washing the body with water; and then the priest is sent for to perfume the deceased with incense. It is performed with prayers and hymns. But persons of rank are solicitous to carry this pious rite yet further; and when the body is placed in the coffin, a succession of priests attend it day and night, with tapers burning, chanting hymns, and reading portions of the holy Scriptures. When the time of watching is expired, and all things are ready for the interment, the relations are then called together who are to appear as mourners, and bear up the pall. But before the coffin is closed, the ceremony of *the kiss* must be performed, which is the last act of respect to the body. The priests first, and then the relations and friends take their farewell of the deceased, either by kissing himself or the coffin. The order of the burial service is as follows.

After the priest has poured forth his incense from the holy censer upon the corpse and the persons present, he then gives the benediction, and the choiristers chant the response:

“ O our Saviour, let the soul of thy servant rest with the spirits of just men made perfect; and grant him that blessed life which is with thee, O thou lover of mankind! O Lord, let the soul of thy servant find peace in thy peace, where all thy Saints repose. Thou art God, didst descend into Hades, and delivered those that were bound. Do thou, Lord, give rest to the soul of thy servant!”

The coffin is then carried into the church, the priest going before with a lighted taper, and the deacon with the censer. The procession stopping, and the body being set down in the sanctuary, the ninety-first psalm is sung in the most solemn tones. After this follow other anthems

with prayers, some of which, from their beauty and exquisite pathos, I shall transcribe. The first was composed by John Damascene, usually called John the Monk.

“ What pleasure of life is unmixed with sorrow? What glory upon earth is of long continuance? All are more fleeting than a shadow, all more deceitful than a dream! In one moment death snatcheth all away. But, O Jesus, in the light of thy countenance, in the beauty of thy holiness, give peace to him whom thou hast chosen, for thou art the lover of mankind.

“ Behold the struggles of the departing spirit when separating from the body! How does she lament, and there is none to have mercy upon her! Does she turn her eyes to angels? She supplicates in vain. Does she stretch her hands to men? There is none to help. Let us then consider the shortness of life; and from Christ alone seek peace for our departed brother, and mercy for our own souls.

“ All things are vain which cannot survive the grave. Will riches survive, or will glory attend us beyond the tomb? Death approacheth, and all these vanish away. Therefore, let us cry unto Jesus the immortal King, to give repose to him who is departed, and to place him in the habitation of the joyful.

“ Where are the affections of the world? Where the vain dream of earthly delights? Where gold and silver? Where the multitude and din of attendants? Look on this coffin, behold this narrow grave! all here is dust, all ashes: the vanities of life are a shadow, and have passed away. Come then, let us implore the immortal King. O Lord, vouchsafe thy blessings to thy departed servant, and grant him repose in thine everlasting kingdom.

“ Thy word, O Lord, created me. Thou didst endow me with a visible and an invisible nature. Thou didst form my body of the clay,

and inspired my soul by thy divine and quickening spirit. Therefore, O Christ! give life to thy servant in thy rest for ever.

“ I weep and lament when I consider death and those who are laid low in the grave; when I behold that body which was created after the image of God, deformed and inglorious! But our Redeemer liveth; and through his might, what is sown in corruption shall rise up incorruptible. Truly then we may say, blessed is the Lord who maketh us partakers of his kingdom.”

After several short prayers for the pardon and beatitude of the deceased, the following is chanted, as if addressed by the dead to those around.

“ Brethren, friends, kinsmen, and acquaintance; view me here lying breathless, motionless, bereft of all that made me lovely in your eyes! But yesterday, we conversed together, we looked on each other; and now death hath sealed my lips, and closed my lids for ever. Come near all who loved me, and with a last embrace, pronounce a last farewell. No longer shall I sojourn with you, no more will you hear the sounds of my voice. To the Judge I go who is no respecter of persons; the master and the slave; the sovereign and the subject; the rich and the poor; all are alike before him; and according to their deeds and his mercy shall they be put to shame or to honour. Therefore, let me intreat, and beseech you all to pray earnestly unto Christ our God that I may not be tormented with the wicked according to my sins, but be received into the light of life!”

When this appeal is sung with all the pathos of religious melody, I cannot conceive any thing more solemn and affecting. The dead body of one we love lying before us; his graces and imperfections laid low in the grave: nothing seems alive but our own grief, and his conscious

soul trembling before the All-perfect God. We hear him cry for our prayers! Such an adjuration strikes against the heart with a force unutterable. The next invocation is not less impressive. It is delivered by the priest.

“Come, my brethren, let us give our last farewell to our deceased brother, giving thanks to God! He hath now forsaken his kindred and approacheth the grave; no longer mindful of vanity, or the cares of the world. Where are now his kindred and his friends? Behold they are now divided from him! O what a separation, my brethren! What lamentation accompanies this hour! Approach, embrace him who lately was as one of yourselves! He is now delivered up to the grave; he is covered with a stone; he sojourneth in darkness, and is buried among the dead. He is separated from his kindred and friends. Every sinful connection with life and vanity is now dissolved. The spirit hath forsaken her mansion: the clay is disfigured, the vessel is broken. We carry a speechless, motionless, senseless body to the grave: let us intreat the Lord to grant him repose!

“What is life? a flower, a vapour, the early dew of the morning! Approach therefore, with attention contemplate the grave. Where is now the graceful form? Where is youth? Where is the brightness of the eye, where the beauty of the complexion? All are withered like grass, all are vanished. Come, and let us with tears fall down before the pitying Jesus!

“Life is a shadow that departeth, a dream of error, the fruitless labour of imagined existence. Let us fly from the corruption of the world, that we may inherit the eternity of heaven! Come hither O ye descendants of Adam! See, humbled in the dust, a man like ourselves; divested of his comeliness, consumed by worms in the grave; perishing in darkness, and covered with earth! When the awful angels have severed the spirit from the body, then the ties of earth are no

longer remembered ; then the future judgment alone engages our attention. Let us then supplicate the judge, and beseech him to forgive the sins of our departed brother !

“ Come hither, my brethren, and view the dust and ashes of which we are formed ! Whither are we going ? What shall we become ? Who is poor ? or who is rich ? who is master, or who is free ? All, all are ashes ! The bloom of the countenance withereth ; and the blossom of youth is cut down by death. How vain and perishing are all the pleasures and dignities of life ! for, we must all decay and die. Kings and Princes, judges and potentates, the rich and poor, all are human nature and sink into the dust. See ! all the members of the once vigorous body now motionless in death ! The eyes which were once so intelligent, are closed ; the feet are bound ; the hands, clods of clay ; extinct is the sense of hearing ; and the tongue locked up in silence ! All are delivered up to the grave ; all human things are vanity !

“ Harken, O thou mother of the sun that never sets ! Thou parent of the blessed Jesus, we beseech thee intercede with thy Divine Son, that he who is departed hence may enjoy repose with the souls of the just made perfect ! O, our Saviour Christ, let the soul of thy servant rest in peace in thy kingdom !”

Then the priest, turning towards the body of the deceased, says :

“ May thy memory endure for ever, O, our brother, who art worthy to be blessed and to be had in remembrance !”

The choir repeats the same thrice ; and after that the priest pronounces the absolution, through “ the mediation of Jesus Christ,” aloud. The corpse is then laid into the grave, while the funeral anthem to the Trinity is sung over it. When it is lowered into the earth, the priest takes a shovel of dust and casteth it cross-ways upon the coffin, saying :

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the round world, and they that dwell therein.”

After which he pours oil out of the lamp, and scatters some incense on the lid. The grave is then covered in; and the ceremony ends with a prayer to the Saviour for the rest and eternal happiness of the deceased.

A vulgar opinion has gone abroad, that in the Greek church it is usual to put into the coffin with dead persons a writing called a passport to heaven. This idea is a mere fable. A paper often is placed in the hands of the deceased when they go to the grave; but it is rather a confession of their misdeeds, than any license to carry them into the presence of their offended God. I shall give you the petition or confession; as I conceive its spirit to be as pious as the prayer is finely composed.

“O thou Creator and Preserver of all, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, in three persons, but one godhead, substance, and essence; who art incessantly praised by all creatures; who by thy holy will, foreknowledge, immeasurable goodness, and inexpressible wisdom, didst create me also thy servant (the name of the deceased) to glorify thee, O Lord my God, to celebrate thy holy name, gratefully to thank thee for thy mercy, and to endeavour by all virtues to attain thine everlasting kingdom. But, O divine Trinity, I have sinned against thee, I have offended thy holiness, I have broken thy commandments during my life, and have not preserved, as I ought, thy image and likeness existing within me. I have defiled my soul and body by all manner of sins; and by wicked actions have moved thee to wrath. But though I have been deceived by the vanities of the world, yet O Lord, have I not cast myself wholly from thee, my creator, my life, my joy, my hope, and

my salvation. And now my days being limited by thy power, I willingly resign them. My soul separates itself from my corruptible body, which, when it seemeth good unto thee, shall with this body rise again to life immortal; which consummation I hope for, from thy goodness and mercy, according to the faith of our holy religion; and because thou didst suffer for our salvation. I am terrified with fear lest the torments of the wicked should be inflicted upon me for the sins I have committed against thee; wherefore, O immortal King, and my God, I pray unto thee with my latest breath that thou wouldst forgive all my sins from my youth up until now; for thou art my God and my creator. I believe in thee, I hope in thee. By thy righteous judgment save me, O Lord, and vouchsafe unto me thy heavenly kingdom. Thou, O Jesus Christ, didst become man for our sakes; grant that we may be delivered from suffering and sin. By thy grace I was born and educated in the orthodox christian faith, and in the wisdom of the only holy eastern church. I beseech thee, O Lord, judge me according to this christian faith, and not according to my works. By this faith of the holy church, and of all orthodox christians who are gone before, I earnestly beg for mercy, forgiveness, and remission of all my offences. And in this faith I come unto thee, O Lord, without doubt. And at the separation of my soul from my body, I beseech thee to receive my spirit into thine hands; and according to thy mercy admit me into thine everlasting habitation! Amen."

The Russians have no idea of purgatory, yet the natural love which inclines them to prolong the memory of a deceased friend has made them establish services in commemoration of the dead to be celebrated at the grave, or in the church, on the third, ninth, and fortieth day after his death: also on the anniversary of that event, as long as the mourners

live to see it performed. Having brought you to this meditation on the end of our time, I shall bid you a temporary farewell, with as sincere a benediction as ever passed from the lips of priest or bishop. God bless you in weal or woe, in sickness or in health, in life or death! Ever yours, &c. &c.

LETTER X.

St. Petersburg, September, 1805.

I HAVE undertaken a very intricate matter, that of initiating you into all the mysteries of the Greek church: and, perhaps, I shall execute my enterprise so clumsily as to be easily discovered to be no better a novice than the daring Clodius; and so share the same fate that he did at the rites of the *bona dea*, be hooted forth for my impertinence. And yet, my good friend, if that should be your decree, I shall take it as rather ungrateful: in asking me to penetrate these mysteries, you send me into the temple; and if I am debarred from inspecting the Holy of Holies, or deemed sacrilegious for having touched the ark at all, you must not unite in the cry against such presumption, by blaming me for not carrying the whole of the fabric by storm.

Much time is required, much reading, and many conversations with the intelligent ministers of the Greek church, to gain any correct idea of its institutions. The books which relate to its services in Russia are numerous, and all in the Slavonian language. That tongue being almost obsolete, very little of the service is understood by the congregation; but believing that all is orthodox which the priest utters, they repeat at the end of every prayer the usual response, "Lord have mercy upon us!" and cross themselves with the most unreserved faith.

The ceremony of crossing is done by touching the forehead first, then the breast, then the right shoulder, then the left, and so making the sign of the cross. In this action, the thumb with the fore and middle fingers must be bent together, to represent the sacred number of three.

This is called the reverence. The great reverence is to prostrate themselves so low as to beat their foreheads on the ground.

Both in monasteries and in parish churches, service is performed thrice a day, under the names of vespers, matins, and the liturgy. The service of each particular day begins in the evening of the preceding one. This usage is founded on that passage in Genesis ; “ And the evening and the morning were the first day.” The greatest part of the duty consists in psalms and hymns ; they are not all of them sung, but generally delivered in rather a monotonous recitative. No musical instruments are admitted into the Greek church. The early Christians altogether disallowed them, as partaking of judaism ; and the Greeks continued the prohibition. It is said that Marinus Sanutus, about the year 1290, was the first who introduced organs into the Latin church ; and so fond am I of their “ pealing notes,” that I think the Romans much obliged to him. We have adopted the practice in our protestant church with happy effect. Indeed, though I esteem the devotion of the heart as the only true devotion, yet I would not have it bestowed alone. There is something niggardly to the Giver of all Good, in worshipping him with as bare a homage as possible. As he gave us all the powers we possess, I would have their first fruits dedicated to his honour. With my will, all the arts should mingle their labours to decorate his temples : and that such devotion of them is not despised by the Most High, may be gathered from the plan given to Moses for building the tabernacle.

But to return to the Greek ritual. I shall begin in order, with the vespers, and give you a sketch of the service. You will perceive, by the frequent mention of the change of place of the officiating ministers, that the ceremony must have rather a theatrical air. As most days in the year are dedicated to some Saint ; so in every day's service there is some

reference made to the holy personage whose name marks it in the calendar. The vespers begin before sun-set. The priest standing before the royal doors, which are those that lead into the sanctum sanctorum, gives the benediction; then several short prayers are repeated, which are immediately followed by seven longer ones, called the lucerns. The priest comes forth from a door on the north side of the sanctum sanctorum, and offers up petitions for the people and the state. Psalms or hymns are then sung; and an invocation addressed to the Saint of the day. A hymn to the Virgin succeeds, and a prayer to her Divine Son for his grace: at that moment the royal doors are thrown open, and the deacon, holding the censer, comes forth, followed by the priest, and the clerks bearing lighted tapers. The priest gives the benediction; after which the deacon incenses the holy table and exclaims, "Wisdom stand up!" The priest and deacon then return into the altar (or sanctum sanctorum), the doors are closed on them, and an anthem is sung. The words are so beautiful that I can not but repeat them.

"O Jesus, thou most gentle light of the sacred glory of the Immortal Father! we being now come to the setting of the sun, and seeing the evening light that fades to relume again, sing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, God. Thou art worthy at all times to be praised by the voices of the pious, O son of God; therefore the world glorifieth thee!"

In the mean time, while this and other hymns are sung, the priest re-appears, and standing before the congregation with his hands crossed upon his breast, makes his devout reverences and retires. The deacon then comes forth from the north door, and repeats several prayers for the sovereign and the church. The choiristers sing the song of Simeon. And after more invocations to Jesus and the Virgin, the priest pronounces the following:

“ O Lord, grant us, now retiring to sleep, repose both of body and soul; and protect us from sinful dreams, and the sensuality of the night and darkness. Assuage our unruly affections; quench the fiery darts of the wicked, which are treacherously thrown against us; repress the seditions of our flesh; and lay our earthly and worldly thoughts asleep. Give us, O Lord, quickness of understanding, purity of thought, sobriety of heart, and temperate sleep, free from all the illusions of Satan; that we may arise at the hour of prayer confirmed in thy commandments, and have the remembrance of thy judgments strongly infixed in us: and grant that glorifying thee in the night, we may bless thee for ever more!” With the benediction ends this service of the vespers.

The matins, which are celebrated at break of day, are on the same plan with the vespers, only praying for that almighty guidance through the day, which has so mercifully preserved them during the night. I shall not therefore detain you with any particular description of this duty, but proceed to notice the liturgies, or communion services, of this church.

In Russia there are three liturgies, which are used occasionally; *Saint Chrysostom's*, which is in ordinary use; *Saint Basil's*, for particular days; and that of the *pre-sanctified*, performed in the great fast before Easter. St. Basil's is the most ancient, it being composed by him when he was bishop of Cæsarea, and considered as the first liturgy that ever was committed to writing. It was adopted by the church of Constantinople before St. Chrysostom wrote his for that diocese. As the church of Russia took her ritual from that of Constantinople, like it, she uses both communion services on different days. St. Gregory is supposed to be the author of the *pre-sanctified* office; so named because it is celebrated, on the Wednesdays, or Fridays in Lent, with those elements which have been consecrated on the preceding Sunday.

The communicants in the Greek church receive the holy bread standing; and every person is obliged, by a civil decree, to take it at least once a year; which is usually done in the fast before Easter, neglecting it ever afterwards till that stated time comes round again. However, though they do not communicate, they are very eager to attend the liturgy, or *hearing mass* as it is called, which is performed every day. The offertory is a service that precedes the liturgy; intended as the preparation of the elements, and the opportunity for the congregation to lay their offerings on the altar of the Lord. Its directions are as follow:

The priest who is to officiate must be at peace with the world, and guard his heart against the admission of any impure thought. He enters the church, and being joined by the deacon, they make three reverences eastward before the holy doors. They pay the same homages to the image of Jesus, kissing it with great solemnity; and also to that of the Virgin Mary. After this they bow to the two chorusses which stand on each side, and then proceed to the altar. During these transactions many appropriate prayers are said. Being come within the sanctum sanctorum they bow thrice before the holy table, kiss it, and the gospel which is laid upon it, and again bowing repeat each a prayer in a low voice. The priest then puts on several additional vestments, and approaching the *prothesis* (a second altar) places the sacred vessels in order, setting the dish on the right hand, and the chalice on the left. He takes the bread in his left hand, and the holy spear in his right, and with the spear signs the bread with the cross. He then thrusts the spear into the bread, praying over it the whole time. The deacon pours mingled wine and water into the chalice. The bread is cut into portions, and arranged in a very curious manner upon the dish; every piece having a particular invocation said over it. This done, the deacon puts incense on it, and the priest covers it with the holy veil. The like respect is

paid to the wine ; and then the deacon, making his reverence, withdraws through the north door, the royal doors being kept close till the celebration of the mass.

When the liturgy is to be performed, the deacon enters from the royal doors, with the priest ; and with him goes through a great many holy bowings to the altar, the image of Jesus, and the Saints. Many prayers are also repeated and hymns sung, till they come to the administering of the eucharist.

The priest taking up the sacred dish that contains the bread, sets it upon the deacon's head, in the manner of the Athenian virgins, who at the festivals of Minerva used so to carry the baskets of offerings to the altars of the goddess. As I remarked before, besides this you may observe many customs which the Christian Greek church has borrowed from the Pagan. The deacon thus charged, goes forward holding the censer, and the priest bearing the chalice, preceded by tapers, march in solemn pomp round the church. Short prayers are repeated during this procession till the priest and deacon re-entering the holy doors, stand there uttering further invocations. They then incense the dish and the cup ; and kissing them, with a fan drive away any flies which may approach. They prostrate themselves before the holy elements ; a second time incense the table, repeating prayers for the living, and thanksgiving for the dead in Christ. The priest and deacon then take the holy bread and wine, eating and drinking it with great devotion. The congregation draw near, one after the other, bowing and holding their heads crossed over their breasts ; and the priest presents to each the piece of bread sopped in the wine. This done many more prayers are said and minor ceremonies performed ; the whole ending with the deacon eating up all the holy bread that might have been left ; pouring

the wine into a smaller cup, and drinking it likewise to the last drop, that not a particle of the elements may be lost.

There are five orders in the Greek priesthood. Bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, and readers which include singers. The episcopal order has other distinctions, metropolitan, archbishop, and bishop. The two first titles are not attached to any particular see, but depend entirely upon the will of the Emperor; they are merely rank, with a very little addition of power, as every bishop is independent in his own diocese. The clergy are divided into regular and secular. The former are of the monastic order, the latter are of the parochial ministers. The secular clergy are called *papas* (fathers), and their highest dignity is that of *proto-papa*; that is the first priest in a great church where there are several of the same order. They are allowed to marry once, but never a second time, under pain of being compelled to quit their holy profession.

Of the rise and progress of monkism, from its birth in the East to its maturity in the Greek church, Mosheim and the learned chaplain to the factory at St. Petersburg give so satisfactory an account, that I need only speak their language to impress you with a pretty correct idea of how this unnatural superstition made its march round the world. The doctrine that the highest virtue, and the perfection of human nature, consist in leading a life of solitude and contemplation, is not less absurd than the fancy that celibacy is the best proof of devotion to God. “Increase and multiply!” was a primary command of the Deity; and how the reverse can be one of his all-wise mandates too, requires a more experienced casuist than I pretend to be, to explain.

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Paul the Hermit, whose life is written by St. Jerome, and who lived in the third century, is considered to be the first founder of monastic

orders. To avoid the persecution by Decius, he fled into the lonely deserts of Thebais ; where it is said, he dwelt ninety years, even till he died, subjecting himself to all the desolations of perfect solitude. It is, however, to be observed, that though this modern Saint Paul is placed at the head of the order of hermits, yet that gloomy manner of life was very common in the East from the earliest periods. The sultry atmosphere which envelopes that part of the globe, by disposing the inhabitants to indolence, is a natural cause of that love of retirement and repose, which drove them into spots sequestered from business and from man. Not having energy to be actively good, they esteemed it sufficiently virtuous to be able to withdraw from all temptations to wickedness ; from all encitements to lose themselves in the interests of their fellow creatures. *To be, or not to be*, seemed the question with them : and not to be with their brethren on earth was the same to them as being with the angels in heaven. Hence it is not wonderful that a people thus inclined should readily embrace the mystic theology which arose at this period. It came from the Platonic school, and that favourite doctrine of its disciples, that " the divine nature is diffused through all human souls." They maintained that silence, tranquillity, and bodily mortification, were the only means by which the faculty of reason, the emanation of the Deity in man, could exert its latent principle of virtue and divine wisdom. Forgetting they were men, they aspired to be angels at once ; and for this purpose, that they might neither love nor hate, tempt nor be tempted, they retired into caves and wildernesses ; and there, lost in meditation, submitted themselves to all the privations of hunger and thirst. By taking particular passages in Scripture detached from the context, they found some arguments to support their cause, and thus defended solitude and celibacy with as hearty a zeal as the apostles did the truly reasonable doctrines of love to God and duty towards our neighbour. Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, were filled

by lonely monks and sequestered virgins ; and the enthusiastic St. Basil brought the same solitary passion into the once social land of Greece. From him most of the monks of Russia name themselves ; and for the most part follow his rules.

The principal of a monastery is called either the Archimandrite or the Hegumen ; the one is equivalent to Abbot or Father, the other to Prior. The nunneries are upon the same establishment ; the principal being called Hegumena ; and the other ordinances are on a similar foundation. The only essential difference is, that men may profess themselves monks at thirty years of age ; women may not become nuns till they are fifty. You will agree with me in approving the latter rule. If a woman be not married before she have arrived at those very mature years, she may well plead that nature has taken the vows for her ; and so without wrong, or robbery to the future generation may take on her the veil that is to exclude her from this for ever. A convent is then a peaceful asylum. Childless, unmated, cheerless is the existence of most aged females who are in that situation. Few but mercenaries attend the old age of her who is what the world calls an *old maid* : and cold is that service which is only purchased. In my mind the refuge of a monastery for these, “unappropriated sweets” of creation, is a most desirable establishment ; and therefore I applaud that of Russia with my whole heart. But to shut up within the eternal bonds of vows and impassable walls, the young, the fair, and the tender, is sacrilege against the first laws of Heaven. It takes from man the mate that was made for him ; it deprives the world of many thousand human beings, who might have sprung from bosoms now condemned to the barren pillow of a monastic cell.

These devotees are distinguished into three degrees ; the probationers (or novices), the proficient, and the perfect. The dress of a

probationer is a black cassoc called rhæsa ; and a hood, also black, called kamelauch, from being made of camel's hair. Proficients wear an upper cloak called the mandyas or lesser habit, to distinguish it from the great habit, or *angelic image*, as it is called. Monastics of this third and *perfect* degree always wear the hood or veil down ; and never, after they have assumed it, suffer their faces to be seen. The same usages hold, both with the men and women in the Russian monasteries. I send you drawings of the monks and nuns in the habits of their favourite Saint, Basil ; and leaving you to contemplate them, shall quit the sacred pall with this oft repeated vow, how truly I am your faithful friend !

LETTER XI.

St. Petersburg, October, 1805.

HOW changed is the face of nature since last I addressed you ! all is frozen ; and covered with the chilling snows of winter. If the city astonished me when under the glowing tints of an autumnal atmosphere, how much more striking does its present pale silvery light make it appear !

Now *indeed this is Russia!* every sensation, every perception, confirms the conviction. The natives have suddenly changed their woollen kaffans, for the greasy and unseemly skins of sheep. The freezing power which has turned every inanimate object into ice, seems to have thawed their hearts and their faculties : they sing, they laugh, they wrestle ; tumbling about like great bears amongst the furrows of the surrounding snow. In fact, this season, so prolonged with them, seems more congenial with their natures than their short but vivid summer.

This year the bosom of the Neva was encrusted with ice at an unusually early period ; it took place on the 14th of the present month : but in the September of 1715 it was shut up by a frost so intense as to become in a few hours safe for carriages of the heaviest burthen. Soon after the commencement of the present winter the bridge of boats (which communicates with that part of the city built on an island called Vassilly Ostroff), was allowed to swing to the opposite side of the river, in order to permit vast sheets of congealed water to pass forward into the gulph. After an early frost followed by a temporary thaw, these masses

find their way down the Neva; they come from the interior, the lake Ladoga, &c. and proceed with frightful velocity. Sometimes a quick frost arrests these accumulations, and renders them in one night safe for conveyances of every description. Frequently the ice thus collected does not finally dissolve till the expiration of the ensuing May. In that charming month, I am told summer re-appears with the suddenness of enchantment; and every thing around seems rather like the instantaneous mechanism of an English pantomime, than the regular action of the season.

Far different is the scene at present! Where are now the expanded waters of the Neva? The gay gondolas and painted yachts? The myriads of vessels and boats continually passing and repassing? All have disappeared: one bleak extended snowy plain generalizes the views: and scarcely a trace is left to convey an idea that a river ever glided through the heart of this imperial city. The roofs of the palaces, public buildings, and private houses, are shrouded in the same pale garb. But no objects are so strangely beautiful as the trees which grow in several divisions of this metropolis; when divested of their leaves, the repeated coats of snow thickening on their branches, form them into the appearance of white coral encrusted with a brilliant diamond dust. Even the beards of men and horses are white and glittering with this *northern ornament*.

Cold to the Russians, seems to be what heat is to the torpid animal; for Petersburg at this moment presents a prospect of much greater bustle and activity than during the warmer months. The additional multitudes, spread in busy swarms throughout every quarter, are inconceivable: sledges, carriages, and other *traineau* vehicles, cross and pass each other with incredible velocity. The sensation excited in the eye by the swift, transitory movement of so many objects upon the unbroken

glare of the snow, is painful and blinding: and you might as well determine to fix your sight upon a particular ant (at the demolition of its little world), as on one of these figures when beholding them from a height. From the fortress tower for instance; where I have just been beholding a scene as extraordinary to an *ish* eye, as it is undescrivable and amusing.

You will naturally expect a description of the sledge, a prominent feature in a Russian view. It is a machine on which not only the persons of the people are transported from place to place with unparalleled speed, but likewise the product of other nations is passed many thousand versts into the interior. The sledge is precisely a pair of colossal skates joined together. On these, (according to the taste of the owner) is erected the most agreeable and convenient carriage which either his purse may afford or his situation claim. The sledges of the humbler order are solely formed of logs of wood bound together with ropes into the before-mentioned shape: on this is an even surface of plank or matting, for the accommodation of themselves or loads. You will see a Russian pair in one of these conveyances, amongst my pencil memorandums. The sledges which succeed the drojcka (the St. Petersburg hackney-coach), are generally very neat, yet always gaudy, being decorated with red, green, gold and silver, with strange carved work and uncouth whirligigs of iron. Their interior is well bespread with *damp* hay, for the benefit of the hirer, in order to keep his feet *warm*. It is so difficult to describe the precise *cut* of these vehicles, that I must again refer you to the more accurate delineation in my sketch-book.

The sledge-carriage of a prince, or a nobleman, is uncommonly handsome. All its appointments are magnificent; and never out of harmony. In it we behold the genuine uncontaminated taste of the country; no bad imitations of German or English coach-work are here attempted;

all is characteristic ; and a picturesque effect, peculiarly its own, is produced by the vehicle itself, its furs, its horses, their trappings, and the streaming beards of the charioteers. The nobleman's sledge is built exactly on the same principle with those of inferior people ; only differing in the width of the body, which is made to hold two persons. It is warmly lined with rich furs ; and to prevent the lower extremities of the occupier from being cold, has an apron (like those of our curricles) formed of green or crimson velvet, bordered with gold lace. On a step behind, stand the servants with appropriate holders. This place is often filled by gentlemen when accompanying ladies on a sledging party.

The horses attached to this conveyance are the pride of the opulent. Their beauty and value are more considered than the sledge itself. The excess of vanity amongst the young officers and nobility here, consists in driving about two animals whose exquisite elegance of form, and playfulness of action, attract the attention of every passenger. The form of these horses is slight and Arabic, possessing the grace of an Italian greyhound with a peculiar lightness and looseness of pace. One only, is placed in the shafts which never alters its pace from a rapid trot ; the other is widely traced by its side ; and is taught to pace, curvet, and prance, in the most perfect taste of a finished manège. Their tails and manes are always of an enormous length ; a beauty so admired by the Russians that twenty horses out of thirty have false ones. Indeed this custom is so prevalent, that frequently the most rascally Rosinante and pigmy Fin-galloway have long artificial appendages, richly clothed with knots of dirt, hanging as low as the ground. *

But to return to the sledge horses. The harness of these creatures is curiously picturesque, being studded with polished brass or silver, hundreds of tassels, intermixed with embossed leather and scarlet cloth.

These strange ornaments give the trappings an air of eastern *barbaric* splendor, perfectly consonant with the animal's shape. However, as every carriage in Russia (even should it be built in the excess of the British mode), is drawn by horses thus romantically caparisoned, the union is sometimes monstrous: and I have often felt the contradiction so forcibly, as to remind me of an absurd sight I once saw at home. It was an Indian chief in a London assembly. He was decorated with chains, shells, and tyger's teeth, while all the spruce, powdered *beaux* around him were in the extreme of European *costume*.

The passion of the Russians for rapid motion, has produced the sport called a sledge-race. A regular course for that purpose is kept always smooth, and railed off upon the Neva. Crowds assemble there to witness the wonderful velocity with which this race is performed. The species of horse used on this occasion is an animal whose swiftest pace is a peculiar sort of trot. No race is ever run quicker. Indeed the rapidity of this is incredible, being not at all inferior to that of a gallop. The sledge horses never step out in the usual way, but are taught to lift up both legs on the same side, which gives their motion a singular appearance. By this habit the action of the horse's body is doubled, and their speed consequently increased twofold. I do not yet know whether regular matches are made; or whether the spirit of sport produces bets, &c. I did not perceive any symptoms of this species of gambling, nor did I investigate that *important* question; contenting myself with surveying the *tout ensemble* merely as a picture of rude magnificence.

The surrounding winter scenery; the picturesque sledges and their fine horses; the scattered groupes of the observing multitude; the superb dresses of the nobility, their fur cloaks, caps, and equipages, adorned with coloured velvets and gold; with ten thousand other touches

of exquisite nature, finished the scene, and made it seem like an Olympic game from the glowing pencil of Rembrandt.

I will now give you an idea of the constituent parts of the animated objects of this scene. I mean the figures and habits of the personages present. The nobility of both sexes, when not enveloped in pelisses, appear in our fashions, only a little more *à la Française*. But it is in the dress of the peasant, the simple covering with which the unsophisticated native of the snows of Russia shields himself from the cold, that we find the characteristic garb of these northern regions. The head is protected from the inclemency of the weather by caps of velvet and fur, some round, others square in the Hulan form, or varied according to the choice of the wearer. A long kaftan of blue or brown cloth reaching below the knees, sitting close to the shape without any cape, and crossing diagonally the breast (being fastened with cylindrical buttons of brass or white metal till it reaches the bottom of the waist), is the body's covering. Round the waist is a sash of crimson worsted net, like those worn by British officers. In this they place their gloves, or if they be labourers, their hatchets. Their necks are completely bare of any other shelter than their hair which hangs down in straight locks all around it. Their shirts and trowsers are of coarse linen striped with either red or blue. Thick swathes of rags are rolled about their legs to keep out the cold, over which they pull a pair of large and ill-constructed boots. Those who do not arrive at the luxury of these leathern defences, increase the swathings to such a bulk by wrappings and cross bandages, that their lower extremities appear more like flour sacks than the legs of men. When thus bulwarked, they stuff them into a pair of enormous shoes, made very ingeniously from the bark of the linden tree, at the expence of three halfpence. Their mode of habilitment undergoes no other alteration during the winter, than perhaps exchanging the



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R. R. Pender 1911

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kaftan for a sheep-skin of the same form. This style of dress appertains to the commonalty alone, and it is curious to observe how closely it resembles that worn by the English in the reign of Richard the Second. I draw my ideas on this subject from our monumental remains of that period, when it was usual to commemorate the form of the deceased in the very habit he wore when alive. Any one who has considered the old tombs in our cathedrals, or has studied the costume to be seen in many illuminated manuscripts extant, will not doubt of the fact, but immediately perceive that the peasantry of Russia in the nineteenth century, are contemporaries in fashion with those of England in the fourteenth.

You will necessarily expect that my gallantry cannot overlook the personal decorations of the fair ladies of the same degree of rank: but alas! this race of the lovely sex are such contradictions to their usual appellation, that I fear you will think me a very uncivil commentator. However, judge for yourself. They are generally stunted, clumsy, round faced, small featured, and sallow complexioned. The latter defect they strive to remedy by a profusion of paint of various hues, which they daub on with as little taste as art. The wives of the lowest classes wear a short gown of blue woollen cloth, bound with divers colours, most glaringly imitating the rainbow interlinings on their faces. The waist is usually fastened by a close row of cylindrical buttons. Their heads are ordinarily bound with a flowered handkerchief of the gayest pattern, terminating beneath the chin. On holidays, a little front of gold and coloured stones is added, formed like the diadem of Juno. In the most excessive cold this slight coëffure is the only covering for the head; but for the shelter of the body, the ever-valuable and customary sheep-skin is applied to, in the shape of an English

peasant's bed-gown. Warm stockings and boots are the defence for the legs.

The wives of mechanics and Russ merchants dress with more taste and costliness. Their gowns are of rich brocade, and their heads fantastically adorned with pearls. Their cloaks are shaped like the doublet of Sir John Falstaff, and of the same materials; being velvet, either crimson, scarlet, or purple, lined and caped with sable fur of the most expensive sort. They also wear boots, made of leather or velvet, according to the pecuniary ability of the purchaser. Indeed this invention for the comfort of the leg is so respected here, that the smallest infants, just able to crawl, are encumbered sooner with boots than with shirts.

I must not omit to mention one odd custom. As soon as a woman enters into the happy state of matrimony, she binds up the whole of her hair beneath the dress of her head. In the days of her maidenhood she wears it platted, like the Chinese, and tied with a bunch of ribbands at the end. I could not learn the origin of this practice: and like many unaccountable usages in other countries, I believe it is now followed merely because it is an ancient custom.

Russia contains but two classes of people, the nobles and the slaves. If a third may be admitted (and such a one is rapidly creating itself), it will be the merchants. Should we mingle foreigners with the natives, we have then a decided third class already, composed of merchants and other genteel settlers from various countries. Including these, with the inhabitants and military of the city, I am told that three hundred thousand is nearly the population of St. Petersburg. If we estimate the divisions of so numerous an assemblage, what a multitudinous body

must be the slaves. Probably thirty thousand may be the amount of the aliens: and if we allow seventy thousand for the court and the military, then two hundred thousand are the residue of the populace, or slaves. These latter people, who are usually slaves to the Crown or the nobles, are universally good-natured, and possess a wonderful ingenuity and quickness of apprehension. At present their shrewdness is so apparent in bargains, that if in making any, you do not compel them to give written articles of agreement, you may be sure of being cheated in every possible way. A little while ago I spoke of their Spartan modes of speech; I can also pay them the compliment of registering their Spartan mode of action, as a dextrous theft in the way of over-reaching, is regarded by them as the very triumph of their genius.

Formerly the whole nation was most lamentably addicted to inebriety: but the exertions and example of Peter the Great soon rooted out this detestable practice from amongst the higher orders; and at the same time laid the exterminating axe to many other vices of similar enormity. However fond the ancient nobility may have been of the *mantling goblet's sparkling juice*, their modern descendants are the most abstemious with regard to wine and other strong liquids, I ever met with. Drunkenness is no where to be seen but with the lower ranks; and they, like the swine in the Gospel, have so potently imbibed the foul fiend, as to be carried headlong to their destruction. During the chilling blasts of winter, when the congealed blood seems to demand some generous cordial to dissolve its rigidity and warm the heart, it is then that we see the intoxicated native stagger forth from some open door, reel from side to side, and meet that fate which in the course of one season freezes thousands to death. The common career of a poor creature thus bewildered, is truly distressing. After spending perhaps his last *copeck* in a dirty,

hot *kaback* or public house, he is thrust out by the keeper as an object no longer worthy of his attention. Away the impetus carries him, till he is brought up by the opposite wall. Heedless of any injury he may have sustained by the shock, he rapidly pursues the weight of his head, by the assistance of his treacherous heels, howling discordant sounds from some incoherent Russian song ; a religious fit will frequently interrupt his harmony, when crossing himself several times, and as often muttering his *gospodi-pomilui*, " Lord have mercy upon us ! " he reels forward : whether these devout ejaculations may arise from a presentiment of his fate, or some faint glimpse of the danger of his situation, I cannot pretend to say : but so it is, for a few moments, at different intervals ; and then he tears the air again with his loud and national ditties : staggering and stumbling till his foot slips, and that earth receives him, whence a thousand chances are, that he will never again arise. He lies just as he fell ; and sings himself gradually to that sleep from which he awakes no more. Thus, like the heroes on Hohenlinden, the snow becomes his *winding-sheet* ; and the bitter blast alone now fills the air, no longer agitated by the abrupt murmurs of his fading voice.

During one severe winter, that so terrible to Europe, in the year 1789, terrible to you and me, like any other tale of other times, only by tradition ; it spent its rage in the careless days of our infancy ; but, alas, how many storms of the elements and of the world have beat upon us since ! — But to return. During that winter the cold was so inveterate in Russia, that on the road between St. Petersburg and Mosco, not less than fourteen thousand persons perished from its fury. You may imagine how certain is death to the individual who falls asleep in an open atmosphere of twenty-five degrees of frost, when I tell you that



A Gentleman in his Winter-Walking Dress

the birds often drop dead and stiff from the trees; and water reaches the ground in a congealed state when thrown at this season from any height.

As I have not been neglectful of the defence of my person against this all-penetrating enemy; and as my preservatives are *synonymous* with those in general use, I will give you an idea of the comfort and *graces* of my figure when winterly accoutred. On the head is worn a turban-formed cap of sable; a large cloak, called a *shoub*, with arms, lined throughout with bear, Siberian-fox, racoon, or other skins, covers the body, reaching to the ankles: it wraps well round the wearer, being well caped and cuffed with the fur. A sort of shoes called *kangees*, of elk or calf-skin, rough both within and without, fence the feet. Those who do not use these, wear large leather or velvet boots, flannelled or furred, which are drawn over the ordinary appendages to the legs. Thus habited it is scarcely possible to recognise your friends, or even to trace out a single lineament of a human creature. For sooner on the first glance of so strange a figure, would you mistake it for some fierce non-descript monster, than suppose it possible to be an intellectual being. How often, when I have seen one of these rugged forms ready appointed for the sledge, conversing with some lovely female, have I thought of the pretty fairy tale of *Beauty and the Beast*! And that the idea is a tolerable picture of our appearance when so habited, you will see, *vide* my drawing. My present reference to the story which has so often charmed our infancy; and my frequent appeals to the accompanying sketches, must remind you of the little gilded books we used to turn over together in that blissful morning of our lives, when we read the varied description of some wonderful animal, a unicorn for instance, which would be delightfully out of tune with a *forty days' journey* into the north.

as much like the truth as a trumpet. Indeed, were you not to yield as large a proportion of faith to me, as we formerly did to our unknown authors, you would hardly believe, were I even to write under my drawing *this is a man*, that it were not rather a Rustian bear, or as I said before, a hairy monster without a name.

Any of the extremities being more than usually exposed to the air, are apt to be frozen; and if proper precautions be not taken in gradually thawing them, the suffering party may pass the remainder of his days, deprived perhaps of his nasal promontory; or be subject to the illiberality of public conjecture of how he might have lost his ears. Besides there are the inconveniences of curtailed feet or hands; and the pain of a tender visage, from the scarifying of the skin. It is scarcely possible to convey to you an idea of the sensation produced by a bleak wind blowing in your face in an atmosphere of seventeen degrees of cold. Suppose it already stripped of the cutaneous covering, and scraped rapidly all over with the fragment of a rusty iron hoop, or an old piece of pumice stone:—this, believe me, my good friend, is but a faint attempt to impress you with the torment of such Borean kisses. Few of the higher orders submit their persons to these rough salutations, always moving about in carriages when they are not shut up in close rooms. I believe the reason why the English, who have been long dwellers in Russia, yet retain their fresh, British complexion, is because, notwithstanding the extreme cold, they continue their daily bodily exercise in the open air.

The winter habiliments of the ladies are much more graceful than those of the men, being warm without many extraordinary enfoldings. Not exposing themselves, as our sex are often obliged to do, to the out-

ward atmosphere, they do not require such a labyrinth of fur to exclude the cold. Their attire differs little from that worn in England; and makes no sensible variation to the eye, except a little more *en bon point* in the appearance, as the dresses are wadded throughout; a practice that is indispensable; for a cold caught in this climate almost immediately engenders the most dangerous fevers; and life is too often the forfeit for an hour's indiscretion.

The fair of this metropolis are not in general very formidable rivals to those of other capitals which I have visited. There are some very fine women, but the majority have small claims to the title of beautiful. Their features are rather of the kalmuc cast; and from the sedentary habits they acquire, nature soon allows the rose of their charms to blow into too full luxuriance. Like exotics in a hot-house, the artificial heat brings them to untimely maturity; and they fade away, even at the moment when we expect to find them at their highest bloom. But it is only their exterior which thus changes. At the age of thirty, or thirty-five, the face may be withered, the figure overgrown; but still youth is in the mind and the heart: and conversing with these charming women, you soon forget that she who discourses with the wit of Thalia or the grace of Erato, does not also possess the beauty of Venus as well as her tenderness. You must recollect that this is only the general description of the ladies in this city. There are many exquisite exceptions: and when we consider their mode of life, we can only wonder that there are any. Stoved rooms, fresh air excluded, no exercise, hot suppers; all tend to demolish the shape, destroy the complexion, and impair the health.

My observations on the Russian fair have hitherto been confined to

St. Petersburg, and I am desired not be too hasty in forming my judgment. When I penetrate further into the interior, I shall then see the true Muscovite character ; and be better able to inform you whether the blood of Circassia, mingling with the Russ, has been more propitious to the formation of beauty than the wide intermixture of marriages on the banks of the Neva.

There are several very lovely Polish women here at present : and also a few from our little Island. Their gentle countenances, affable manners, and affectionate hearts, are sweet remembrancers of home ; and draw my thoughts so entirely thitherward, that I can add no more, but that I am ever, at all distances, and in every climate, dearest friend, yours most faithfully.

LETTER XII.

St. Petersburg, November, 1805.

TO strangers, unaccustomed to the various changes produced in men and things by the influence of intense frost, nothing appears more wonderful or note-worthy than that part of the city dedicated to the sale of frozen provisions. Your astonished sight is there arrested by a vast open square, containing the bodies of many thousand animals piled in pyramidical heaps on all sides. Cows, sheep, hogs, fowls, butter, eggs, fish, all are stiffened into granite.

The fish are attractively beautiful; possessing the vividness of their living colours, with the transparent clearness of wax imitations. The beasts present a far less pleasing spectacle. Most of the larger sort being skinned, and classed according to their species; groupes of many hundreds are seen piled up on their hind legs against one another, as if each were making an effort to clime over the back of its neighbour. The motionless apparent animation of their seemingly struggling attitudes (as if suddenly seized in moving, and petrified by frost), gives a horrid life to this dead scene. Had an enchanter's wand been instantaneously waved over this *sea* of animals during their different actions, they could not have been fixed more decidedly. Their hardness, too, is so extreme, that the natives chop them up for the purchaser, like wood; and the chips of their carcasses fly off in the same way as splinters do from masses of timber or coal.

A hatchet, the favourite instrument of the country, is used in the operation; as indeed it is generally applied to every other act of ingenuity or strength. Sometimes to things so nicely delicate, that if the boors were taught to write, I have little doubt but their pens would be made and repaired with it.

But to return to the market. The provisions collected here are the product of countries many thousand versts beyond Mosco. Siberia, Archangel, and still remoter provinces, furnish the merchandize, which during the frost's severity is conveyed hither on sledges. In consequence of the multitudes of these commodities; and the short period allowed to the existence of the market, they are cheaper than at any other part of the year; and are therefore bought in large quantities to be laid up as winter stock. When deposited in cellars they keep good for a length of time.

At certain hours every day the market, while it lasts, is a fashionable lounge. There you meet all the beauty and gaiety of St. Petersburg; even from the imperial family down to the Russ merchant's wife. Incredible crowds of sledges, carriages, and pedestrians, throng the place: the different groupes of spectators, purchasers, venders, and commodities, form such an extraordinary *tout ensemble* as no other city is known to equal.

During this mart of congealed merchandize, affecting scenes often occur. The provisions, I have already told you, are transported from the most remote provinces of this vast empire. Consequently the infinitude of sledges necessary for their conveyance are accompanied by boors. It is not often the case, that for more than one season the same

persons travel with them ; and this change of conductors is produced by motives more honourable, more powerful than interest itself.

Whenever a new levy is made for the army, a given number (according to the state's necessity) is taken from every five hundred slaves capable of bearing arms. Most of the villages have been thus deprived of some of their inhabitants ; and it is with the affectionate hope of again seeing their different relatives, that many very aged men accompany these frozen caravans. St. Petersburg is the extent of their views. The knowledge of that city and of their own village, bounds their geographic acquirements : it is thither all their wishes tend ; for to that spot alone, they falsely believe, is fixed the object of their fond solicitude. Ignorant of any particular corps, and only conscious that it is a *soldier* they seek, under the liveliest impressions of expectation and affection, they momentarily look for the blessing of again embracing a son, a brother, or some other near and beloved kinsman. Actuated by similar feelings, hundreds of soldiers (after their military duties are over for the day) are seen going from groupe to groupe, searching for their own parents amongst these patriarchal strangers. To the observation of a benevolent individual, these scenes are delightful. Nothing can be more affecting than to witness their joyful meetings ; fathers embracing their sons, brothers their brothers. But expressions of disappointment and envy at their comrades good fortune, frequently excite more distressing sympathies ; and the heart saddens while listening to the impatient enquiries of many, who are soon deprived of their dearest hopes, by the information that another country contains their offspring : perhaps another world.

My pencil would but feebly trace a scene which can only be pictured

by the feelings. I must therefore plead its inability ; and for my pen, how weak too is its description ! Thy reflective, and finely tempered mind, my friend, would here have much food for rumination. How gladly should I listen to thoughts which were ever as full of wisdom as of sympathy ! In witnessing this scene, wouldst thou not gather interesting details of humble and domestic love, its joys and disappointments ; and clothed in thy pure and touching language, how would they penetrate the heart ! But though Heaven has not gifted me with eloquence, I am not quite unblest with the spirit whence it springs ; and, therefore, feeling all the tenderness of private interests, I am not less sensible to that disinterestedness which loses the soft comforts of life in devotion to the public weal.

Writing of these sons and brothers, who go far from their families, to defend their country's honour, reminds me of a recent act of their courage, when led on by the invincible arm of one of their most distinguished Generals. Knowing that your heart beats in unison with every deed of true heroism, I cannot refrain from repeating it here.

The name of Prince Bagration is well known to you. His already hard-earned laurels, gathered on the plains of Italy, and snatched from the precipices of St. Gothard, have established his reputation as a soldier for ever. He is indeed the Sir Sidney of Russia ! possessing the same intrepid enterprise, dauntless perseverance, and a resolution to overcome, which no opposition can withstand. How often have you dwelt with admiration on the narrative of his actions in Italy ; how often have we, together, commented with delight on the bravery with which he extricated his troops from the difficulties into which the misfortunes of others had led him ! He seems fated to be thus involved ; and thus

bring himself out from danger with increased glory to himself and honour to his soldiers.

The late affair on the advance of the main body of the Russian army under the gallant General Kutauzoff, is a new instance of his presence of mind ; and how much more powerful men are when sound military knowledge directs the points of their bayonets. His command was a small one ; not over more than four thousand men, who formed the rear guard of Kutauzoff's army. That General, from several unforeseen circumstances, found himself obliged to pursue his march ; and so leave the troops of the Prince in the extremest peril. General Murat, meanwhile, with an incalculable force threw himself between these two divisions, and totally cut off all communication betwixt the rear and the main body of the Russians. The French troops surrounded those of Bagration. The experience and ever-wakeful attention of the Prince made him fully comprehend his situation, and determined him, instead of yielding the day as lost, to keep the enemy on the alert ; and so gain time for the troops under Kutauzoff to advance beyond the reach of the enemy. At the moment he took this resolution, he well knew the price he should pay for carrying it into execution. To preserve the main body of the army he must sacrifice the lives of his heroic followers, and lay down his own. But that appeared to him the lesser evil. Their deaths would secure the escape of the great hope of Russia, its concentrated troops, its bravest generals, and he made no hesitation in taking his choice.

A messenger was sent to him from the enemy, importing that it would be for the mutual advantage of both parties, if the commanders of each army should have a conference before the advanced posts. Bagration

acquiesced, and was attended thither by the brave Dolgorucky alone, whilst Murat appeared with a concourse of generals and aides-de-camp. The purport of this meeting was to inform the Russian Prince that articles of peace had been signed between Austria and France; and that in consequence the Russian troops were to retire within their own frontiers. Every argument which falsehood could invent, and subtilty enforce, was brought forward to persuade Bagration of the truth of what was affirmed.

“ Where are your credentials for this, General Murat ? ”

“ My honour ! ”

“ The interview is finished,” replied the Prince ; “ I shall pursue the orders of my Emperor.”

“ Then you will not retreat ? ” demanded Murat ; “ if you advance, your road must be through the breasts of sixty thousand Frenchmen.”

Bagration felt the mightiness of his course. He returned to his troops, and addressing them as his brothers in glory, named the host by which they were surrounded. “ If,” cried he, “ we would regain the main army, we must hew our passage through their hearts.”

The soldiers, worthy of their intrepid commander, exclaimed in one voice, “ Lead us on ! You are with us, victory before us ! we follow ! ”

Bagration seized a bayonet and rushed upon the French. He was

not alone, for his brave followers were a phalanx at his side: his heroic soul seemed to animate all their hearts, and give an herculean vigour to their arms as they mowed down the opposing ranks, and spread the bloody field with the writhing bodies of *imperial republicans*. It was an action which might rival that of Thermopylæ: but, it met a better fate. Bagration was victorious: he had preserved the main army by his resistance; he now saved his division with inconsiderable loss; and soon formed a junction with Kutauzoff. Two thousand of the enemy were killed in the field, and fifteen hundred taken prisoners, with several stand of colours.

To the sudden boldness of the attack may be attributed much of its effect. Murat, aware of his numbers and advantages, deemed any serious opposition on the part of Bagration as so desperate, that he regarded his brave menace as nothing more than a sort of theatrical gasconade to render his exit a little more respectable. Any attempt to cut through the French he thought was to meet inevitable defeat and death; and, therefore, when the blow really was struck, it fell like electricity; astonishment and confusion were the consequences on the side of the French: and General Murat had the mortification to see the plain strewn with his own dead; and the invincible Russian march off the field a conqueror, at the head of his victorious and unthinned ranks.

This incident shews how necessary that spirit is to a soldier, which knows when to prefer action before deliberation. There are moments when a General must decide by a kind of brave instinct, and throw himself at once into the arms of the giant Danger; grapple to him, and with a resistless heart fling him to the ground. If he wait till the tremendous power springs upon him; the weight may be too heavy, the shock too

great, and he sink to the earth overwhelmed and perishing. There is a difference between rashness and this intrepid daring. The situation must warrant the hazard, and then it is glorious to seize the peril and put it to the issue of a fall. It is this spirit which makes Great Britain now the mistress of the waves.

I cannot dismiss my subject without relating a circumstance that happened during this last gallant exploit of the Russian Prince. A grenadier had been separated from his line, as it hurried forward to attack the French. At this crisis he was assailed by four of the enemy, one officer and three soldiers. On perceiving them approach with fury in their eyes and gestures, like his General he determined to sell his life dearly, and calling on "God and Suwarroff!" he met the first with the contents of his piece: seeing him dead at his feet, he received the second on the point of his bayonet; the brains of the third he beat out with the butt-end of his musket; and would have sent the soul of the fourth after those of his comrades, had not the Frenchman's heels stood his friend, and carried him far from danger. The undaunted soldier, seeing the coast clear, quietly regained his regiment, and fell into his place in the ranks with silence and regularity, as if nothing had happened.

Prince Bagration did not neglect so extraordinary a proof of martial resolution. And some time afterwards, having communicated it to the Emperor, that generous Monarch (who makes his favour, like the sun, shine on the worthy of all degrees) ordered him a purse of a hundred ducats, and promoted him to the rank of a subaltern officer.

Bagration and Kutauzoff are now on the frontiers. The brave Alexander is also gone thither; but whether to take the command or not,

we are ignorant. However, at any rate, the presence of so beloved a Sovereign must impart new animation to his troops. He was set out before my arrival ; hence I have not yet had the happiness of paying my personal obeisances to so much true imperial dignity. In the course of a few days, I hope to be in presence with the fair of his illustrious family ; and then you shall hear again from your friend.

LETTER XIII.

St. Petersburg, November 1805.

I HAVE been at court. It was at the anniversary of St. Nicholas ; a day held sacred by the Russians ; as they often wait for its return in order to fight a battle, storm a city, or commence any other momentous enterprise.

We arrived at the Winter Palace about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and followed the gentleman who introduced us, into a large saloon where numbers of officers and nobility were assembled, waiting the imperial family's arrival. Not many minutes elapsed before a bustle at the lower end of the apartment announced the entrance of the court. The expecting crowd then opened to right and left. Thirty gentlemen in rich embroidered suits passed along : these were what they term *les chamberlains actuel* ; each having a golden key and blue ribbon, the insignia of their rank, attached to his frock. The young Empress, dressed in white satin and gold, then followed.

Her person is not tall, yet it is graceful and elegantly proportioned ; and the air of it is tender and interesting. Her eyes are soft and blue ; her complexion touchingly delicate. I wished that hideous thing called a hoop devoutly at the devil, as it hid the lower part of her figure, and cruelly lengthened the confinement of her waist : this barbarous rem-

nant of Gothic taste always destroys those graces inseparable from the female form in its natural state. However, notwithstanding these disadvantages, the shape of the young Empress was charming.

There was an air of melancholy about her which added ten thousand beauties to a countenance already sufficiently lovely. This gentle sadness is easily accounted for. It is known to arise from the present absence of the Emperor, who is gone to meet danger, and perhaps death; and the recollection of a sweet infant, of whom that inexorable ravager of our earthly happiness has lately deprived her, and whose loss she still deeply regrets.

As she passed through the long line of military nobles, she honoured us on each side with the most smiling affability; and her small regular features expressed a soft urbanity, almost approaching timidity. Her voice is peculiarly melodious.

After the Empress, a long retinue of ladies of honour, noblemen, &c. followed: we fell into the train (for two of our countrymen accompanied me), and entered the chapel. This consecrated apartment is not very large; and does not differ materially in form from those I have already mentioned, except that its decorations are of a more gorgeous kind and a finer taste. Gold, paintings, and bronze, form the skreen. A huge chandelier of massive silver hangs from the ceiling, and is always lighted. Numerous choristers, habited in scarlet robes richly embroidered, were ranged in opposite lines. Her Majesty (for she was the only one of the imperial family present, the rest being indisposed), was advanced several paces before her attendants, and stood the whole of the service, which lasted above an hour.

When the religious rites were over, the metropolitan bishop, surrounded by other ecclesiastics, came from the interior to salute the Empress. She presented them her hand which they pressed to their lips, while she at the same moment put her right cheek to theirs (the usual mode of friendly salutation here). The contrast of this groupe was strikingly picturesque. The young Empress's lovely lily-like form, and splendid attire, opposed to the solemn grandeur of the father's robes (whose long and silver beard swept his bosom); the equally venerable appearance of the other divines; and the gay habits and martial uniforms of the surrounding young noblemen, formed altogether a scene of interesting and brilliant effect. Foreign officers, Cossacks, Georgians, and Princes from the interior provinces, completed this romantic picture.

No sooner was the ceremony of salutation past, than all returned in the former order. I did not linger behind, for my heart loitered not with any of the courtly damsels who had passed: and yet they were *passing fair*; very fair, had not the superior charms of the Empress, like those of the radiant Diana, cast all her sparkling attendants into shade.

Amongst the many accomplishments boasted by the Russian ladies is one, on which the saucy prejudice against the sex might be very malapert: I mean their wonderful facility in learning languages. Almost all modern tongues are easy to them; and French is even so much more familiar than their own, that they speak and write it with fluency, when they can hardly spell a word in their native Russ. The neglect of the latter language is not surprising, as it is hardly ever spoken in polite circles; being totally confined to deeds of state, law, and ecclesiastical

acts. But with the language of France, that strange perverted nation has not exported its system of ethics, nor its superficial, glossing manners. The nobility of Russia are honest, frank and hospitable. A something about them still exists which reminds you that Muscovy and England first shook hands in the days of our good Queen Bess. There is a hardihood, at the same time a courtliness of demeanour, that recalls to recollection the prowess of Sir Francis Drake, the gallantry of Sir Walter Raleigh. What Elizabeth was to England, Catherine the Second was to Russia: the effects remain: after the flower is cropt and laid in the tomb, its fragrance survives and embalms the surrounding atmosphere.

Owing to the peculiar constitution of this empire, the arts and sciences are, in general, but secondary objects in the minds of the natives. The nobles deem no profession honourable but that of arms. Ambition would be thought to stoop, if it sought any celebrity from excelling by the chissel, the peneil, or the pen: hence, the finest talents among the high-born are never directed towards any of these points. Military glory is all their aim: and, if it chanches to be united with the spontaneous growth of any milder genius, it is well; the possessor is pleased, and his friends delighted; but no fame accrues from classical endowments. The study of the arts and sciences is left to slaves; or at best, to slaves made free: and they, unhappy men! from being descended from that contemned race, can never, by any exertions of their own, or by the conclusive appeal of appropriate actions, assert the inherent nobility of the heavenly gifted mind. Slavery is a taint that can never be erased: and thus the generous ambition of genius is cankered at the very root.

The usual pastimes of the nobles, when they are not pursuing military

exercises, or employed in offices of state, are the carriage or the sledge during the morning. They dine at half past two o'clock, and after that either sleep for a couple of hours (for they do not sit long at table), or play at games of cards, of which there are a great variety; billiards is also a frequent amusement; but the most favourite is a game called *Boston*, a sort of whist; it is not known with us; and yet, strange to tell, the Russians say it was invented by the British officers during the campaigns in America. The evening produces the theatre, or assemblies at their own houses, when, either cards are again resorted to, or a light dance exhilarates the scene, to which the company who prefer sitting, play on the piano-forte and harp. Various little pastimes, such as forfeits, the magic music, &c. &c. are brought forward. And thus wit and innocent mirth carry on the hours till supper is announced. This meal is generally too luxurious for the health and beauty of those who draw round the table. Soups, fish, roast and boiled meats, and savoury dishes, fill the groaning board. Good appetites are seldom wanting; and thus, both mentally and bodily recreated, or rather overburthened, do the parties betake themselves to rest; their stomachs fevered with the richest food, they lie down in bed-rooms where an artificial heat, like that of a hot-house, ferments their digestion, leaving them at waking, pale, languid, and spiritless. This is the common mode: but where experience has opened the eyes of some, and travel informed others, such injurious customs are set aside; and we behold, as in England, the blooming cheek of a Hebe rising brightly with the morn; and the athletic form of manhood moving with all the freshness of health, all the elasticity of youthful vigour.

I am interrupted by a message from my friend at the Ambassador's

that *great news have arrived from England* ! I go to learn the tidings ; and hope, before I finish this letter, to congratulate you on some glorious event for our country and for Europe.

* * * * *

Days have elapsed since I could return to this paper. An event indeed ! Great and momentous to the whole world ! “ How have the mighty fallen, and weapons of war perished ! ” Nelson, our brave, our invincible Nelson is no more ! Heaven, then, in the moment of victory, took from England her never-failing hope. Dear has our country paid for the glory of Trafalgar : but it is a glory that will cast the Corsican star into shadow : it must shine in every British heart for ever ; and at the hour of danger, whether in the field or on the wave, go before them like a pillar of fire to light them to fame and victory. Yea, even though hosts oppose them, will not his last words rally their souls to stand ? “ *England expects every man to do his duty* ! ” What a war-cry is that ! What an arousing call to those who have been his compeers ! What a summons to deeds of honour to generations yet unborn ! To dwell on the bright name of a departed hero, how does it inspire the mind to emulate his example ! To die like a *Wolfe* or a *Nelson*, is a destiny so great, that cold must be the heart which is not awakened to enthusiasm and patriotic zeal when it recalls their life and death to remembrance. Who would not partake their bed with joy ? Defending your country, opposing your breast as a shield between England and her enemies, let the balls come : if they strike, it is for thousands your life is given. VICTORY ! safety to your country, the preservation of relations, friends, countrymen, all are in that word ! So *Wolfe* died, and

so *Nelson* fell ! The shout of triumph arose, and the soul took its flight to Heaven ; angels receive it, and as a benefactor of mankind, it takes its happy seat amongst hosts of kindred, blissful spirits ! Here, this is the bright career of the real hero. His sword is drawn for justice alone ; to defend, not to oppress ; and thus his laurels are immortal as the fields of Paradise. But those of the mere conqueror, the invader of neighbouring countries, the usurper of others' right, where are they ? What is he ? Though his exterminating brand laid the whole universe at his feet, he is still only a conqueror, a murderer of mankind ; and though fame may speak of his deeds, glory can never surround them. Glory can be attached to nothing that is not virtuous. We fear the tyrant, but it is only the hero that we revere. Where were the tears which fell for the *Timurs* of any age or nation ? Behold those which flow for *Nelson* ! England mourns him as a parent, as a protecting genius ravaged from her shores. And distant nations, they mingle their sighs with her's : to every quarter where his victorious and guardian standard flew, have the news of his death been sent ; and grievous has been the lamentation. In being the champion of liberty and honour, he was the champion of all mankind ; and as such, he who fought for all, is wept by all.

The account of this memorable event was transmitted to the Russian army on the frontiers, and there read to the Emperor *Alexander* by his surgeon, a Scotch gentleman, who is as worthy of the country in which he was born, as of the imperial confidence. The tidings struck the Emperor in the most forcible manner ; and while his brave eyes filled with tears, he uttered such an eulogium on the merits of the departed hero, as, could he be sensible of human tribute, must be a sweet incense to his immortalized spirit. Indeed I should not do justice to the Russians

were I not to say that the general feeling they express for our Nelson is that of men regretting the loss of a dear brother. Their rejoicings for the victory of Trafalgar are chastened by the idea that the hand which won it is now disabled for ever in the grave.

Such is the drawback to our triumph: and I am sorry to say, that we anticipate even another alloy to our joy. It is rumoured that a battle has been fought between the combined forces of Austria and Russia, with those of France; and that the result obliged the Emperor of Germany to make an immediate peace with the enemy. The Emperor Alexander and his forces, indignant at what has happened, are on their return home. Long before this arrives in England, you will have received from the scene of action, more certain intelligence of this disastrous affair. At present the report is, that the principal failure lay on the side of the Austrians; nay, if it be true what is said, failure is too gentle an epithet for their conduct; rather baseness and treachery, in the worst sense of the words. The rumour goes that a large body of the Austrians not only deserted to the French, but even fired upon the Russians, whom they had brought thither as their allies and protectors; thus adding ingratitude to their deep dishonour. How must such a stigma on his countrymen pierce the heart of the Archduke Charles! But he still exists, and virtue may yet revive in Austria.

The loss which the brave Russians have sustained, they say, is very considerable. The enemy too have had a most dear victory. But I have no doubt, that in the usual style of these *ci-devant republicans*, it will be proudly set forth as an achievement of their arms with little damage on their side, and no infamy whatever. In those accounts which they

give to the world, nothing is said of their bribery, their corruptions, their deceits, their falsehood: the net is no where spoken of that is spread by wiles under the feet of monarchs; the golden draught is no where mentioned which poisons their councillors, and lays their honesty and vigour asleep. Ministers, not their Sovereigns, often seal the misery of thousands.

The public are cajoled by being told that all the conquests of France are the effects of dauntless bravery alone; hence its leader is deified as a kind of god. But look under the purple that invests him, and there you will see the serpent's wily train. He is bold, he has great talents, and insatiable ambition; and he was placed on a stage where he might exert all. In such a situation, when once a man forgets that he is an accountable being, when he determines to live to his desires alone, how easy is it for him to glut them to the utmost. No check menaces him but that of fortune; bowing to no god but his ambition, faith, honour, life, death, are as nothing in his hands: he throws them to the right or left as they impede his course; and makes straight forward over the neck of groaning Nature to his goal.

Bonaparte has now all Germany at his command. Kings, they say, are to be speedily created, and the whole of the country to be newly divided. Intermarriages between the Corsican's relations and ancient princely families are to be formed; the better to build up the foundations of the universal empire he seems to meditate. He does indeed "bestride the globe;" and sets its rightful sovereigns to "peep about beneath his huge legs to find themselves dishonourable graves." There is something very awful in the idea of how great may be the fall of this

colossus. He is a tremendous object ; a chastising instrument in the hand of Providence ! And, when the nations have undergone the scourge, what may then be the “ woe to him by whom their evils came ? ” These are mysteries beyond my comprehension : but they are mysteries of Heaven, and it becomes us to adore in silence. Adieu.

LETTER XIV.

St. Petersburg, December, 1805.

ALL is too true ! The allies have been defeated, and a fearful blow has been given to the great cause of Europe. But, as I said before, you have better accounts of the affair than we can have here ; so I will no further enlarge on what must so deeply affect us all. I know the disaster has happened ; but I am yet ignorant of the particulars, for there are here no public national prints, except one or two in the Russ language, very sparingly communicative. Even the English newspapers which come hither, are delivered so irregularly, that the chain of their information is miserably destroyed. However, we shall learn more in a day or two, as the Emperor is hourly expected. When he arrives you shall have my sentiments of this amiable and idolized monarch. Meanwhile, I will interest you in the virtues of the illustrious widow of his predecessor, the good dowager Empress.

How can I do it better than by giving you a sketch of an institution which reflects the highest honour upon its august patroness ? Ever since the death of the late Emperor the occupation of this Princess's life has been to institute, protect, and advance charitable foundations of every description. In short, we have in dear England scarcely one from which she has not drawn some philanthropic hint. To the proper regulation of these charities, almost the whole of her time is dedicated.

The hospital in question, was instituted forty years ago; and is in truth but a branch of one more extensive at Moscow. It is designed for the reception of foundlings. The number of little deserted souls now within the walls of this blessed asylum at St. Petersburg, is nearly six hundred. When I went over the house the matron shewed me eight lovely infants which had been left that very day at the place appointed for their reception. To obtain admission for her child, the mother of one of these poor little beings at a certain hour repairs secretly to a given spot, where, depositing her charge in a wicker basket, along with some relic of affectionate remembrance, (perhaps nothing but tears!) she pulls a bell, on which it is instantly taken from her sight, in all probability for ever.

The infants (arranged in wards and classes according to their age) are watched during the helpless period of existence with maternal care. When their mental and bodily powers are capable of useful occupation, they are instructed in such arts or employments as may render them advantageous to that state which is so justly entitled to their filial gratitude. The girls are taught first to make the different parts of their habiliments; then to manufacture fringe, lace, and an exquisite embroidery, which is used on court dresses, funeral palls, and sacerdotal robes. The boys are made alert in tailoring, shoe-making, and similar occupations of public utility. By this means the capital is supplied with industrious mechanics of both sexes: by this means the humanity of the state turns private indiscretion into national benefit; and not only thousands of innocent creatures are preserved in existence, but many, many a parent is saved from the most horrid of crimes.

I must not omit telling you that there is a part of this institution

dedicated to females under “*a state of maternal solicitude.*” The peculiar good intended by the reception of women so circumstanced, is, not only to render them assistance, but to furnish subjects of instruction for a certain number of girls who are destined to practise midwifery. After being properly qualified, these young persons are distributed throughout the most distant provinces of the empire; and thus become blessings to the ignorant, suffering peasant.

Cleanliness reigns in every part of the Foundling Hospital. The various wards are airy and commodious. Each foundling has a small separate bed (very clean and neat), over which is written the name of the occupier, with its supposed age, and the date of its admission. When the foundlings attain the age of twenty-one, I am told that a pecuniary donation, and a certificate of their conduct, ushers them into the wide world.

This excellent charity is not only furnished with unexceptionable superintendants for the advanced classes, but anxious care is taken to supply the infants with the nourishment allotted to them by nature. For this purpose, great numbers of hale, stout women, who have newly become mothers, are brought from the villages of Ingria and Finland, in droves like milch cows; who (after their health is ascertained), are distributed over the hospital.

In my life I never saw such wretched, humiliating specimens of human nature! their odious appearance struck me the more horribly when I remembered that they were of the *angelic* sex. Imagination cannot paint their strange costume, their stupid countenances; the sallow mahogany-coloured flesh of their uncouth flabby persons, their settled

vacancy of stare, and complete non-entity of expression. The duty marked out for these poor creatures to fulfil, is the loveliest and most interesting one in which a woman can appear: but here, alas! disgust is the only feeling excited. While surveying them, I could not help making a comparison between their aspects and the wet-nurses of England. The latter, all health and roses; their eyes beaming a simple philanthropic affection over the little helpless being thus succoured; their persons firm as marble; and their whole air vouching for their imparting the riches of a good constitution to the child whom a mother's inability, perhaps, has consigned to their care.

But to return to my Russians. At one period there was such a superabundance of the *living fruits* of love or immorality, that a sufficient number of these temporary parents could not be procured. To supply the deficiency goats were substituted, and for some time answered well; but from unavoidable change in this animal's food during a few months in the year, it was found that the children thus fed *à la Romulus*, grew sickly; the practice was therefore discontinued. When nursed by a goat, the infant was held under the stomach of the beast to suck; which position possibly prevented it from taking its nourishment peaceably.

If (as it is said) the temper, propensities, and constitution are transmitted by our *lacteal* food, they who have been thus subsisted will make but heavy members of society; for little of the graceful or the active in spirit can be augured from the foster-children of Pigs, goats, and asses. Yet perhaps the inconveniences may not be very great; as the destined pursuits of these oddly-nurtured mortals seldom require either very laborious or very brilliant exertions of the mind.

Being on the subject of nurses, I will dismiss those of the Foundling Hospital, and introduce to your notice such as attend upon the children of the nobility. No part in the domestic arrangement of a Russian family is more curious to a stranger. These women are selected with great care from amongst the numerous slaves of their proprietor; and come, perhaps, from some very distant village to cherish the youthful count or prince. Their dress (which is national and characteristic), always marks their occupation.

On their head they wear a wrought gold cap of stiff materials, taking an enlarged form, like the diadem usually given to Juno; the whole of its gilded surface is profusely but awkwardly spread with pearls, foils, cut-glass, &c. Their ears and neck are loaded with showy ornaments; and their brawny shoulders are half hidden by an exquisitely white shift, gaily worked in various colours even to the sleeves, which are loose and hang as low as the elbow. Their body is *easily* confined in a sort of boddice or jumps made *suitably convenient for their profession*. A gaudily embroidered petticoat, with coloured stockings and shoes, terminates the decoration of their person. On the whole they are clean, and do not *olfac* like most other Russian domestics. This latter qualification is truly estimable; as they are generally allowed a seat in the carriage whenever mama goes out; and frequently appear in the rooms destined for company.

At the expiration of the period allotted for their attendance as nurses, they receive a liberal reward; and are permitted to return to their village and boorish husband with all the ~~trappings~~ of their wardrobe. Too often does ~~this savage ruler~~ squander their money and sell their gaieties. While brandy (that powerful persuader to cruelty and



Russian Nurse

vice!) is to be procured, the last kopeck is eagerly expended to purchase it. These uncivilized husbands are by no means *patient* of any refusal from their wives, or *delicate* in their choice of *argument* to enforce submission: for I have beheld such hearty drubbings dealt out upon the shoulders of the sisterhood, as would have been the death of any other woman than a Russian peasant.

I am sorry to say that this mode of compelling obedience is not confined to the poor alone. The domestics in every family being slaves, they as much belong to their lord, as the chairs and tables of the house; and are, in general, treated too much like mere pieces of furniture. While they do their duty it is well; they are quietly used according to their appropriate service; but as fellow creatures they are seldom considered. Should they transgress, they are taught better by a *manège* something like that our countrymen exercise on the backs of their asses. This system is so *abhorred* by the benevolent Alexander, that he takes every opportunity of buying the estates of the nobles, and immediately giving freedom to the peasants. By this generous policy he removes the yoke from their necks, and brings forward into freedom and occasions of earning an honest and independent subsistence, a race of men who will soon form themselves into the most useful part of the body politic; that middle rank, which is the sinew of a nation's strength, the source of her riches, and the guardian of her glory.

We need only turn our eyes to England to see the proof of this. Look at her wealthy yeomanry, her merchants as princes: and her commons sitting at the helm of state, and equal in power with the nobility, guiding it in safety and honour through all the shocks of contending empires! Blest England! Wherever I go, I still think on my

country, as a lover of the dear mistress he has left behind. . Many he may behold fairer and more richly attired; but still, the heart, the heart! The amiable qualities which produce confidence and comfort, do they not make him indeed exclaim

“ Where’er I go, whatever lands I see,
My soul untravell’d still returns to thee !”

Farewel.

LETTER XV.

St. Petersburg, January, 1806.

THE Emperor has arrived from the army. And the guards, as well as the Grand-Duke Constantine's Hulan regiment, are expected ere long to march into St. Petersburg. The peace between France and Austria is ratified. The earth has been sown with blood, and new kings are arising every day from the dragon's teeth. The Continent, at present, seems plunged into a fearful sleep. Bonaparte is the only one awake in the desolated scenc. His machinations and his arms have silenced the people who were once considered as the military oracles of Europe. Vienna has been humbled by his presence; and the Imperialists have mourned in sackcloth and ashes, their too ready credence of his belial tongue. The Louvre will now receive additional treasures; for neither the private nor public museums of Germany can escape the vigilant pillager of Europe. This is the third of the *Lord's anointed* whom he has driven from their capital; and who may be the next, which of us can pretend to say! Though, judging of the fate of nations by their determination and means of resistance, little fear is to be entertained for the independence either of England or of this country. The same *amor patriæ* is paramount here, which so surely guarantees the freedom of our native island. Usurpation is held in equal detestation, while so amiable a monarch as Alexander fills the imperial throne.

Having been presented to this interesting personage, I cannot but

give you a sketch of his figure and manners. I know your eagerness to become acquainted with the great of all countries: I mean the truly great; the illustrious in talents, and the illustrious in virtue: they alone have ever been the great to you; and to them, while resembling them as a brother, have you not always bowed with the humility of a son! But to return to the Emperor.

He is mild in his demeanor, gentle in his motions, and particularly graceful in his address. The goodness of his heart shines forth in his eyes, and the sweetness of his temper ever embellishes his lip with a smile. So great is his benevolence, that not a day passes without bringing forward some instance of his attention to the welfare and comfort of his people; and his lenity in punishing criminals is so forbearing, that in all cases the most tender mercy waits upon his justice. His figure is handsome and elegant, his air affable and engaging; and his countenance ever expresses the benignity of his mind. His height is about five feet eleven inches. He is fair with blue eyes; and his complexion, though not florid, is beaming with health, and most interestingly tinged with the hue of a military life.

On our first presentation, according to the etiquette of this court, the Emperor passed forward, only bowing to the strangers. But after that formal ceremony was once over, at every other levée he converses with all the dignified freedom which sits so gracefully upon persons of his rank; and more particularly captivates in him, from the intelligence and amiable interest of his manners.

The dowager Empress, who is of a Pallas form and mien, is a most admirable woman. I have before given you an idea of her numerous

charities. She is exquisitely accomplished ; and possesses a courtesy of address that is undescrivable. To her fair hand I am indebted for a diamond, which, in devotion to her virtues, I shall ever wear next my heart.

Since the return of its invaluable monarch, St. Petersburg has been a scene of continued gaiety. And as it is also the opening of the new year, a time of extraordinary festivity in Russia, there is no end to the *fêtes*, feasts, and rejoicings.

Amongst them all, I must not omit describing an evening which I lately passed at the Winter Palace. The entertainment given there was a public masquerade ; where, from the imperial family, down to the Russ tradesman, all ceremony was suspended. This immense winter residence (of which the Hermitage forms only a very small part) was thrown open : every saloon, gallery, and corridor blazed with chandeliers. The dome of the grand hall of Saint George shone like a crystal heaven. Indeed, in the luxury of light no country is so lavish as Russia ; for even the meanest houses bear witness to the truth of this observation.

The crowd and heat of the masquerade was almost unbearable (fifteen hundred persons having received tickets of admission) ; and when involved in a vortex where mingled many of the *unpurified* natives, the more refined were unable to form an antidote to the effluvia. Otto of roses and the most costly perfumes, were breathed in vain through this motley and steaming groupe.

The nobility present, who underwent this Saturnalian festival, were full dressed in Venetian and other fancy habits. The lower orders were

attired after their usual manner : but the most curious objects were the wives of the rich Russian merchants (whose national costume had in itself a masquerade effect), attended by their bearded husbands dressed in dark kaftans. As they strolled about the rooms, they appeared like companies of fantastic characters, habited as magicians, and overgrown fairies clad in “ *glittering robes of shining green!*” Amongst the ornaments of these women, my eye was much pleased with one peculiar to their country : it is a coronet of the ducal form, composed entirely of pearls exquisitely arranged. Under this coronet the hair of the single women is bound smoothly back ; that of the married ones wholly concealed. Great masses of fur, gold and silver fringe, finish their gala attire. It is only to carnival days and saints’ festivals that they pay the tribute of so sumptuous an appearance ; and then their mania for outvying a rival, often makes them forego the common comforts of existence.

At eight o’clock the masquerade was filled to suffocation ; and about an hour afterwards the imperial family entered, creating a kind of current in the mob, which is elegantly termed a *Polonage*. This is a promenade in couples, with which all the maids of honour, gentlemen of the court, nobles, &c. fall in. Thus they pass through every chamber, to the gratification of the multitude, mingling without reserve amidst the lowest of their subjects. The ladies of the imperial family were all clothed in the ancient style of Muscovy ; a habit covered with pearls, and by no means unbecoming. But to the beauty or majesty of their coëffure, my stubborn taste for simplicity refused to subscribe. The coëffure is a *thing* entirely formed of various coloured jewels, fixed on the head by means of a cap, from which it rises like a pyramid nearly a yard in the air : large uncouth patterns of flowers are wrought into it,

making an embroidery of precious stones. From the utmost pinnacle of this monstrous non-descript, hangs a huge square of brocaded silk, reaching to the bottom of the back. When you look at this last appendage, without knowing to what it is attached, the effect is ridiculous beyond conception.

After remaining more than two hours in the assembly, the imperial family withdrew into the Hermitage. This department of the palace being sacred to them and their party, became literally a heaven to retire to, from the bustle, heat, and offensive vapour of the purgatory we had left.

In some former letter I have described this celebrated place : at least the pictures which form its splendid hangings. Nothing can exceed the magnificence of its various decorations. Silver candelabra of gigantic size and classic shape, blazing above vases of Siberian marble, are ranged on all sides, amidst every luxurious improvement of couch or chair in French, Turkish, or Grecian taste. These elegant trifles are not too profusely lavished : for they all seem to have their use, and rather add to, than diminish the consequence of those nobler works of art which enrich the walls. Indeed the whole interior of this little palace is so complete, and arranged with such unity of design, that it would be injurious to its merits to attempt comparing it with St. Cloud. That boasted mansion, for the perfection of which every atom of French talent has been exerted, every touch of French taste laboured and repeated, proved at last — but a large *Magazin des Meubles* ! Confused and vilely disposed, the infamous fashion of never admitting two chairs alike into one room has rendered it the most disgustingly expensive, and vulgarly ostentatious display of *fine furniture* that ever yet pretended to

the name of magnificence. St. Cloud is an upholsterer's shop, whence palaces may be fitted : the Hermitage is a palace ready fitted for the reception of Kings.

And here was spread a court supper, that in splendor and taste well accorded with the graces of the imperial family which adorned the banquet. The theatre of the Hermitage, in which operas, masquerades and balls are often given, during the winter residence of the Emperor, was adapted for the occasion in a style exquisitely beautiful and novel. The artist who has the management of these fairy phantasies is an Italian called Gonzalo ; and his genius had now imparted such charms to this little theatre as are far beyond my homely pen to describe.

In the first place, the pit was boarded level with the stage. On this platform were placed tables, in all the pride of an imperial banquet, richly lighted and royally spread for feasting. The festooned curtain common to theatres, was here made of gold tissue, forming resplendent draperies, glittering with fringes of cut-glass. Immediately behind this façade rose drapery of the same magnificent materials in form of a Turkish tent ; from the centre of which hung a lustre whose numberless crystal pendants produced a constellation of light. Over this fell a veil of spun glass, woven into transparent net-work like lace, through which played the prismatic colours with indescribable brilliancy ; cords and tassels of glass in various festoons, crossed each other amongst the draperies ; beneath which stood a circular bower of rose-trees in full blow and fragrance. A range of arches (advanced some paces in front of the bower), were tastefully ornamented with arabesque devices ; and their openings filled up with a film of spun-glass *apparently* finer than cobweb ; on which were painted in opaque colours, sylphic figures,

which thus seemed floating in air. Unseen lights were so ingeniously placed as to reflect from this glassy gauze, producing such an effect as the sun's rays on a light-falling shower.

When the whole of this enchanted spot was illuminated, it might well have been mistaken for a diamond mine, destined for the banquet of genii. Nay, the charm was completed by the sound of music from a hidden instrument, which united in itself the characters of the organ and Eolian harp (I did not see it, but they say it will surprise me when I do.) These soft, melodious breathings issued from the thicket of rose-trees, and finished the magical effect of this *Arabian-night* like scene. While "pleasure winged the festive hours," I almost fancied myself transported to one of the *Fortunate Islands* of the fabulist, or, shall I say to Mahomet's paradise: the banquet of the senses was before me; and around, the lovely Houris with the peerless Cadige at their head! You must forgive my being a little in the superlative upon a subject so excessive in all the luxuries of eye, ear, taste, and smell.

Thus past the evening, and in the morning new scenes of amusement presented themselves. At this season of the year the inhabitants of St. Petersburg dedicate themselves to one continued whirl of merry-making. The streets are filled with men, women, and children in their *gala* dresses; and the gay carriages and sledges of the nobility are ever passing and repassing before the eye. Religion, as well as joy, for the Emperor's return, gives rise to this extraordinary animation. It being the eve of a great fast, the people are resolved to enjoy pleasure in its utmost extravagance, before they are obliged to bid it a temporary farewell. This excess is indulged by the lower classes only; who at this time are seen intoxicated, and perishing in the streets, a sacrifice to their mad

festivity. They who survive this unrestrained debauch, live very temperately during the fast, on herbs, pulse, honey, and fish fried in oil; their beverage, also miserably poor, being nothing but a sort of meagre beer diluted with water.

Immediately prior to this season of penance, all St. Petersburg, from the palace to the hut, is one crowd of activity and mirth. The Neva as well as the streets, is covered with sledges, whose gay contents are shining in silver and pearls, various coloured velvets and costly furs. Some drive up and down certain streets, for instance the *Great Perspective* (which is the *Bond-street* of St. Petersburg), to see and be seen in all the splendor of their winter array. Others partake of the pastimes annually exhibited on the river, very little differing from those of Bartholomew Fair.

The principal amusement of this kind is the Ice Hill. It is a species of exercise very difficult to describe, as I know nothing in England that I can compare with it. The Russians are particularly fond of the amusement; and though dangerous to the ignorant, yet to the practised, from their dexterity in descending the tremendous fall, it is both safe and delightful.

A temporary stage of wood is erected, about forty or fifty feet from the surface of the river; from the perpendicular height of which is a steep descent like the side of an abrupt rock; against this is laid blocks of ice, that soon become an united mass, by means of torrents of water which are thrown along them, and that harden in a few seconds. On the level, at probably two hundred and fifty, or three hundred yards, stands a similar erection; only placed a little on one side, in order to

clear the glassy road for the sledges darting from the summit of its opposite neighbour. This they mount by means of a flight of stairs in its rear; and placing their sledges on the declivity, are conveyed back to the other hill by the same method they left it. Indeed, the force gained by precipitating themselves from the top, is more than sufficient to carry such light sledges to a far greater distance than that which lies between each icy pyramid. The geometrical scratch underneath, will convey to you a general idea of this pastime.



A. A. the inclined planes of ice. B. the flight of steps in order to ascend. C. the flat between the opposite hills; D. people on sledges, impelled towards its base. E. E. fir-trees stuck on the top of the hills to give them a cheerful and pretty effect.

The bearded natives gather a plentiful harvest of kopecks during this carnival, as a few pieces of that money is their usual charge for transporting individuals down the icy fall. The mode is as follows. A sort of sledge, without projections of any kind, but in shape and flatness like a butcher's tray, is most fantastically and rudely ornamented with carving and colours, and placed on the summit of the hill. The native seats himself upon it, very far back, his legs extending in front perfectly straight. The person to be conveyed, places him or herself before him in a similar attitude, and both remaining steady, pass rapidly down the

frozen torrent. The native behind guides their course with his hands, on the same principle as that of a vessel, touching the contrary side to that which they wish to go. To such nicety do they attain, that they steer round groupes of upset persons, without the chance of their giving or receiving the smallest injury. Many go down in these sledges alone; and others on skates; both men and women, who fly forwards in a perfectly upright position. Steadiness seems the chief accomplishment in the Russian skater: and the velocity of his motion, the object of pleasure in the spectator. Here, we nowhere see those graceful motions on the ice, that Mercurial sway of limbs in their volant sweep over its surface, which have been so much your friend's admiration while standing a wintry day by the Serpentine in Hyde Park. You would call the Russians stout skaters; but I fancy the utmost of your skill could not teach them elegance. Not that the generality of men in this country, who have fine forms, are radically incapable of adopting graceful attitudes; but the cumbersomeness of their dress, and the customary modes of this exercise have never included any thing more pleasing to the eye than the simple object of rapid motion. The sensation excited in the person who descends in the sledge, is at first extremely painful; but after a few times passing through the cutting air, it is exquisitely pleasurable. This seems strange, but it is so: as you shoot along, a sort of ethereal intoxication takes hold of the senses, that is absolutely delightful.

As I am on the river, I may as well continue my *cold* descriptions, by giving you an account of a ceremony which I witnessed some weeks ago. It is one of the most celebrated in Russia, and is observed in that vast empire at every place on the same day. I mean the *benediction of the waters*.

The Greek church has two offices for the benediction of the waters. The first may be performed at any time, when there is a want of holy water for baptism or any other religious use. The second, the great sanctification, is instituted in memory of the immersion of Jesus Christ in the Jordan ; and is of a very ancient date. It may be traced to the times of Saint Chrysostom ; and is held in such great respect, that any water so consecrated is supposed to remain for years as fresh as when drawn from the spring ; and when swallowed by sick persons, to cure them of their disease. Peter the Great, when he caused the patriarchal dignity to be laid aside in his dominions, abolished with it many useless and expensive solemnities. But this one of the waters was retained ; on what principle I cannot pretend to say, so shall content myself with merely shewing to you its pageantry.

Being in the Winter Palace, close to the scene of action, I had every advantage for viewing what passed. It was the sixth of January, the day appointed for the ceremony. On the ice of the Neva was erected a kind of temple, made of wood, painted and gilt, surmounted with a gold cross, and in front embellished with pictures relating to the ministry of John the Baptist. The dome of this temporary building being supported by pillars only, through the vacant spaces the eye of curiosity may freely range. An enclosure of fir boughs twisted together, at some distance round the temple, keeps the mobility without, and the nobility within. This spot is carpeted with scarlet cloth, as is the temple, and the platform which reaches to the palace, whence the procession proceeds. The temple is decorated with altars, crosses, relics, holy books, and every sort of sacred utensil. And in the midst of the consecrated enclosure is a hole cut in the ice, which is called the Jordan.

After the liturgy is finished, the priests and archimandrites (the superior of monasteries), and the bishops, apparelled in their richest habits, issue from the Winter Palace; and bearing lighted tapers, the censer, and religious banners, proceed to the Jordan, singing their appropriate anthems. The imperial family and the court then follow; and while the service is performing, all the troops in the city are drawn up round the spot, with their standards waving, and the artillery planted ready to fire at the conclusion of the ceremony.

After several prayers for the sovereign and the people, the priest, blessing the water with his uplifted hands three times, utters this invocation.

“ Be present, O merciful God, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, sanctify this water! Endue it with the grace of redemption, the benediction of Jordan. Make it the fountain of incorruption, the gift of holiness, the water of absolution, powerful to heal bodily sickness, deadly to every evil spirit, inaccessible to every adverse power; and abounding with angelic virtue; that all who draw out and partake thereof, may receive it for the purification of their souls and bodies, for the sanctification of their houses, and for every thing good and profitable to them. For thou art our God, who by water and the Spirit didst renew our nature grown old in sin. Thou art our God, who didst overwhelm and drown sin by water in the time of Noah. Thou art our God, who didst lead the children of Israel through the sea by Moses, and so deliver them from the bondage of Pharaoh. Thou art our God, who didst divide the stony rock in the wilderness, that the waters gushed out to give drink to thy thirsty people. Thou art our God, who by fire and water, through the ministry of Elijah, didst deliver the Israelites

from the errors of Baal! Do thou, O Lord, now sanctify this water with thy Holy Spirit! And grant unto all who touch it, and partake thereof, or are washed therewith, holiness, salvation, purification, and blessing!"

The priest then consecrates the water with the holy cross, immersing it thrice into the stream, and chanting the benediction. This done, he takes some of the water thus rendered of divine properties, up in a dish, and touching the clergy and others with it, gives the dismissal. The guns of all the troops then fire, and the solemnity concludes.

The effect of the varied groupes, the military, religious, and courtly habits, as well as the characteristic accompaniments of adjacent objects, gave the whole a very splendid and interesting appearance. When all was over, we saw mothers hastening to dip their children in the opening made in the ice; firmly believing, while they did so, that they rendered them invulnerable to all the ills of this life, both spiritual and temporal.

Returning home along the river, I passed a couple of beautiful sledges drawn by rein-deer from the Samoiede country, some hundred versts beyond Archangel. The animals were harnessed by the neck, and went extremely swift. They belonged to a nobleman of high rank; and were brought merely as objects of curiosity; the climate of St. Petersburg being so much too mild for them, that they seldom outlive one season. Their appearance in the sledge was remarkably fine, harmonizing most picturesquely with the snows and ice of the surrounding view: and while I looked at them as they swept along in all the majesty of strength and grace of motion, I could not help regretting that their existence was

so prematurely shortened. You know I never was a friend to the passion for novelty when it extends to animate creation, and because it is our fancy induces us to ravish poor birds and beasts from their native wilds, to languish and die in climates inimical to their natures

This letter, from its divers subjects, is a very harlequin jacket ; grave and gay ; any thing, perhaps, but what it ought to be. However, as I wish you to share in all I see and hear, you must grant me some indulgence for throwing down my observations just as they occur. I do not pretend to be favoured with the *Pegasean* quill that was presented to you on entering the world : I never reached the wing of the immortal steed ; but nevertheless, a few hairs I plucked from his streaming tail, and twisting them into a pencil, with a stroke of its paint, now convey to you the visible form* of the scene I have attempted to describe.

Having run a race almost as long as my rein-deer, I shall now bid you Adieu !

* This, with many other sketches written in Russia, and hereafter referred to, was lost in crossing the Gulph of Bothnia.



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LETTER XVI.

St. Petersburg, February, 1805.

AND so you wonder, my dear friend, that I have not yet taken notice of the one subject in which I have always, until this instance, shewn so particular an interest. You ask me, what has become of my attachment to the army, that I have not given you any idea of the state of its establishment in Russia! It is just where it was, the first-born passion in my breast; but, waiting for little more and more information on the subject (which nothing but the return of part of the army from the frontiers could afford me), I have outstaid your patience; and so at present must content myself with quieting your demands by sending merely my first sketch of its appearance and uniforms. Much further I cannot yet describe; for, as I said before, the late absence of the military has deprived us, not only of reviews, but of even the usual ceremony of an imperial parade.

The guards are here, with several other regiments; and from my acquaintance with them, I shall be able to send you a few observations on this department of the Russian empire.

The troops which first strike the eye of a stranger on entering St. Petersburg, are the Cossacs; and certainly more curious objects cannot be imagined. Their persons, air, and appointments, and the animals on which they are mounted, seem so totally at variance, that you can

hardly suppose a reason for so unequal a union. The men are robust and fit for service: their horses appear completely the reverse: mean in shape, and slouching in motion, every limb speaks of languor, and every moment you expect to see them drop down dead under their heavy burthen: but so false are these shows, that there is not a more hardy animal existing; it will travel incalculable journeys, and remain exposed to the heat or cold, day and night, without manifesting any sense of inconvenience.

These little rugged beasts never, like our *war horses*, know the luxury of a snug stable and a well-littered bed, nor ever enjoy the comfort of a curry-comb or whisp of straw. Their sustenance is of the most scanty sort; but, in spite of toil and rough fare, they endure all with unabated strength; and are thus, of all animals, the best fitted for a soldier's life. Indeed, when I consider their training, and also that of the Russian soldiers in general, I cannot but prefer the simplicity of their wants to the comparatively luxurious habits of our army. A man who accustoms himself to costly fare, may not be less willing than one of poorer appetites to brave all the privations of a campaign, or the famine of a siege; but he must be less able to bear them, and so be more likely to sink in the conflict. One of the first qualifications of a soldier is that of being personally hardy: and wherever we have found the most powerful and popular generals, we see that they accustom themselves to endure every privation which could possibly affect a military life. Gustavus Vasa, and Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, are eminent instances of this; and the great Suwarroff gave not a less meritorious example to the army of Russia.

But to return to the Cossacs. Though now formed into regular regi-

ments, they receive no other pay than the usual allowance for cavalry. The origin of this brave race, who in so many wars have been amongst the best soldiers of the empire, was a restless band of fugitives from Astrakhan, and the provinces of Polish Russia, Podolia, and Volhynia. Having left their native soil, they wandered towards the banks of the Boristhenes, where they took possession of several small islands, subsisting themselves by ravages, piracies, and plunder. From this double mode of depredation they soon became formidable to the Turks on the Black Sea. Their maritime adventures, and enterprises on land, formed them into excellent seamen as well as soldiers; and their nearest neighbours regarded them with jealousy and dread.

Stephen Batori, King of Poland, aware of their growing consequence, had the address to attach them to his interests; and, to induce them to serve in his armies, gave them lands and many privileges in the Ukraine, guaranteed to them the right of being governed by their own chief, and put them in possession of the strong fort of Tretimiroff on the Boristhenes. The succeeding Princes of Poland were not so prudent as Batori; and, attempting to entirely subjugate their hardy allies, a sharp contention arose between them; and the Cossacs, overwhelmed by the numbers and discipline of their treacherous friends, emigrated in vast numbers to a tract of country on the banks of the Don and Volga. Others went to the borders of the Caspian Sea, and seizing the town of Azoph, established themselves in great strength. But the Poles continuing to harass them, they applied to the Muscovites for succour; and since then have been most firmly attached to the nation.

They are distinguished by the names of Donski and Ukraine Cossacs; and the Tzar Peter, finding them so valuable an acquisition, allowed

them, unrestricted, their usual government, which is a sort of military democracy. Their chief is called the Hetman, and is elected in a general meeting of the heads of the people, leaving the confirmation of his dignity to the sovereign of Muscovy. The office is for life. Every town has its governor, also called a Hetman, who is chosen annually, and is accountable to the grand Hetman. The Tzar awarded to the Cossacs his protection in retaining to them the enjoyment of their ancient laws and privileges, without paying any tribute to him, provided they would always hold themselves in readiness to appear in arms at their own expence, whenever he should deem it necessary to require their services. I am told that their usual power is 16,000 men, which they can bring into the field any day that is demanded of them by the Emperor.

Their riches consist in cattle and horses. Their habitations are clean, and their diet chiefly fish, flesh, and fruits, cooked in the plainest way. The men are very tall, well-proportioned, and greatly differ in the character of their heads from those of their neighbours. They are hardy, brave, active, and lively; but, like most uncultivated nations, few of them have any idea of the refinements of honour. Their dialect is a mixture of Polish and Russ. When they first accepted the protection of Poland they were pagans; but they now profess the christian religion as it is established in Russia.

Their dress is military and useful; consisting of a close dark blue jacket, and very large full trowsers, under which they wear drawers and boots. Their head is covered with a high black cap of sheep-skin: a red bag hangs from its top ornamented with a chain of white worsted lace and tassels: a red stripe, rather broad, runs along the outside of



An Officer of the Donatky Cossack

the trowsers, as well as a cord of the same colour round the cape and sleeves. A single row of buttons closes the jacket at the breast. A broad leather belt, containing cartridges, and to which is suspended a light sabre, confines their waists. Their principal weapons are a pike about eight feet long, and a pair of pistols. A black belt crosses their left shoulder, to which is attached a sort of thin cartouch-box, holding ammunition, and surmounted with a ramrod. An uncouth saddle is bound on the horse, somewhat like a double pillow, under which is a square piece of oil cloth painted in various colours. The horses are so small that they are mere ponies: their tails and manes are long, ragged, and in many cases clotted with dirt. Some of the men wear mustachios, and some dispense with that fierce appendage. Such is the dress of one order of the Cossacs. I saw another regiment, clothed in red, of much the same fashion, only their caps ran up to a greater height, and are of red velvet. Besides the usual arms, they have the additional one of a musquet. A sort of shirt, reaching to their knees, is the only material difference in their habit from that of the blue Cossacs.

There is another nation, called Bashkeers, in the Russian service. They are the remains of the old Tschalmates, a people who dwelt anciently on the Kama, and united themselves with the Tartarian hordes. The Tartars, indeed, call them Baschkort (hence Bashkeer), that is *Wolf*, from their dexterity in plundering. I send you drawings of these people. Their countenances are exceedingly picturesque, being of a strong character, burnt with the sun, and wearing long beards in all the rudeness of uncultivated nature.

This order of soldiery, in which there is a great variety, is generally

used in the Russian army in foraging parties, pursuits, patrols, *videttes*, or scouts; its discipline not being organized on the regular cavalry system.

The Russian army, taken in general, was under no improved military establishment until the reign of Peter the Great, although some particular regiments, in the time of Michael Romanoff, were disciplined according to the German manner. For the better teaching of his own, he had also several thousand soldiers from the banks of the Rhine, both infantry and cavalry. His native troops were exercised and commanded by French, German, and Scotch officers; and thus he made foreign nations teach him the art of war. The Tzar Michaelovitch, the father of Peter the Great, pursued the same plan; but while he invited experienced soldiers from every country, he strictly forbade the adoption of their manners with their tactics, for fear that by such a change the established faith might be shaken. The completion of the organized state of the Russian military system was left like almost every great achievement of the empire, to the divine genius of Peter. You are too well acquainted with his life to require me to say more on the subject; but certainly his mind was the sun from which alone has irradiated every science that now blesses this country.

He disciplined the whole of the army in the German style, officering it with foreign officers of noted experience and renown. His friend and preceptor *Le Fort*, shewed him what would be his future greatness by fulfilling such a design; and awakening the generous enthusiasm of his nature, every suggestion that promised the future welfare of the country was adopted with promptitude and zeal. By his advice the Emperor formed the young nobility of Mosco into two regiments, in order to

teach them the exercise which he afterwards extended throughout his whole army. There were the foundation of the guards, now known by the name of Preobrajenski and Silchenouski, and who took the place of the ancient Tzarish guards; a body of men resembling in power the Janissaries of Turkey; and that they did not exercise it with less wantonness, the bloody acts on record too horribly proclaim. It was in the year 1690 that this new military system, now so gigantic, received its birth. Before a few years had elapsed, this great Monarch had regularly clothed, disciplined, and appointed pay for a vast army. In 1711, it consisted of fifty-one regiments of infantry; thirty-nine of cavalry, and grenadiers, and bombardiers to the amount of 5600 men: making a total of 109,650. Besides these there were forces in the frontiers and in garrison calculated at 150,000 men; not including the Cossacs, Calmucs, and Tartars, in the service of Russia, amounting to an equal number.

The uniform of the infantry was commonly green with red facings: the cavalry wore blue retained with red: the artillery and bombardiers scarlet, with blue and black facings. The whole army was distinguished with white cockades. Every regiment, like our own, takes its name from the district in which it was raised. The grenadiers are the only exception, and they are called by the name of their commanders. The pay, in the time of the Tzar, was not very considerable; but, according to the period, perhaps fully adequate to the expences of the soldier. To foreign officers he gave almost one third more than he paid to those of his own country. This of course was to induce them to serve him.

I by chance met with a little work on the subject (printed at Strawberry-Hill; it is scarce; and as probably you may have never seen it,

I shall make an extract from it relative to the pay, &c. of the Russian soldier during the year 1710. It was a memorandum of Sir Charles Whitworth's while Ambassador at this court.

The whole expence for clothing and arming a foot soldier was twelve rubles. They were new equipped every two years ; and a kopeck a day was stopped for that purpose out of their pay. The nobility were obliged to furnish horses for the cavalry, for which government allowed them seven rubles for each animal. Sir Charles Whitworth says, that eleven rubles per annum was the pay of a soldier, exclusive of his monthly allowances of corn, peas, bacon, &c. Another author shews that this sum is merely nominal, as more than half of it was deducted for the purchase of clothes, medicines, flints, arms, and a hundred etcetera. As far as relates to these regulations, little difference has taken place to this day ; you may judge for yourself, as underneath I have set down the state of the pay in the time of Peter, and have added to it that of the army at the present period.

In 1710.	Yearly Pay. <i>Rubles.</i>
Field-Marshal . . .	10,000
Lieutenant-General . .	1,560
Major-General . . .	1,170
Major-General, (a foreigner)	1,950
Brigadier-General . .	1,040
Colonel	650
Lieutenant-Colonel . .	390
Major	325
Clerk of the regiment . .	91
Surgeon	130

A COMPANY.

	Yearly pay <i>Rubles.</i>	
Captain	234	
Lieutenant	130	
Ensign	104	
Quarter-Master	91	The Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels had all companies, and of course would receive allowances accord- ingly.
3 Sergeants	15	
6 Corporals	13	
Clerk of the company	13	
2 Drummers	11	
84 Private soldiers	11	

In 1806.

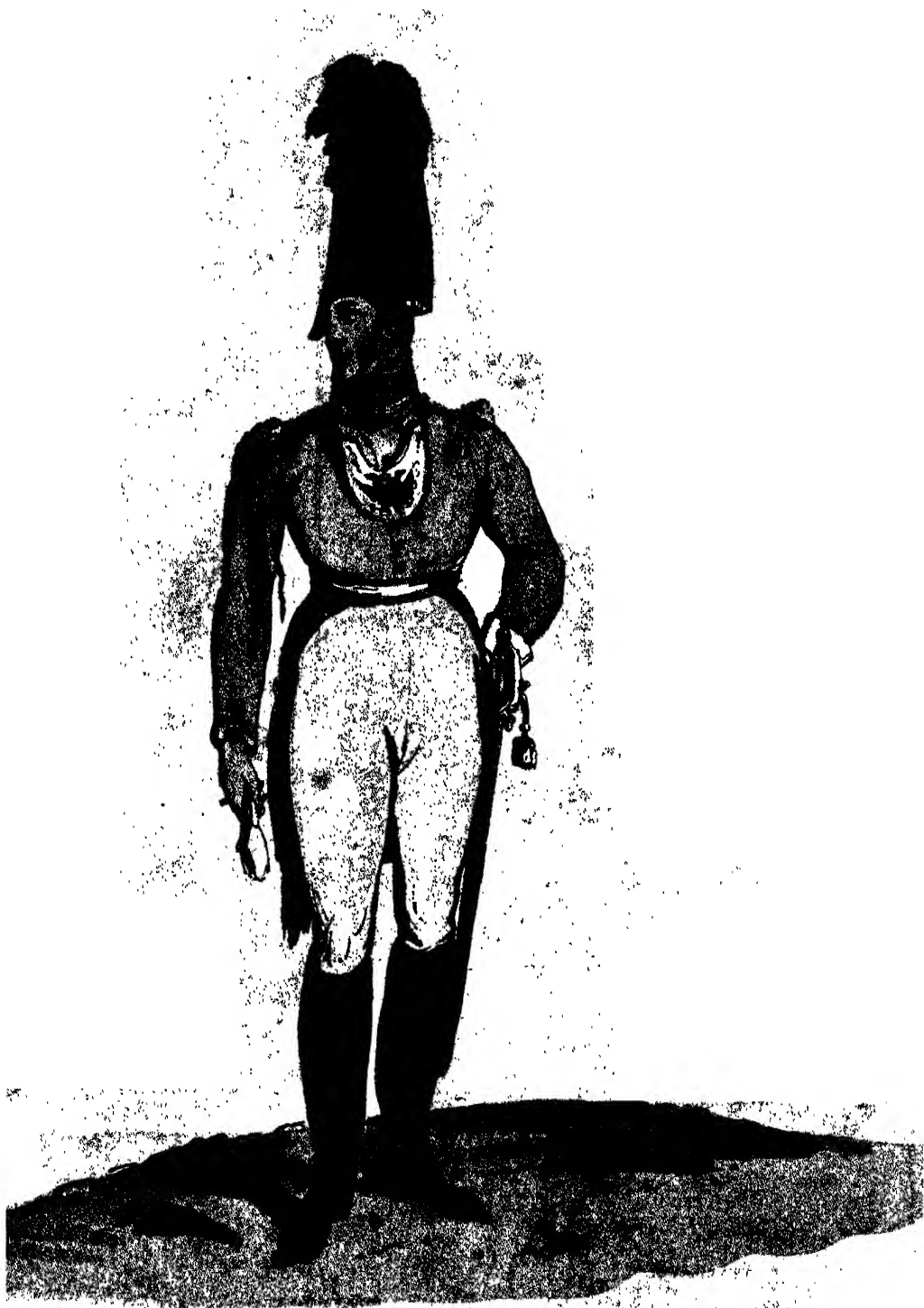
Colonel	900
Lieutenant-Colonel	680
Major	500
Captain	415
Lieutenant	300
Ensign (or 2d Lieutenant)	240
Private of infantry	3 and 30 kopecks.
Private of cavalry	4
Private of artillery	4 and 20 kopecks.

The evolutions of the army remained in the state Peter the First left them, until Peter the Third, smitten by the military fame of Frederic the Second, adopted the Prussian tactics as far as his short reign would allow. Amongst other transformations he changed the generally red facings of the infantry to colours varied according to the respective regiments. His successor the Great Catherine, had no whims in her

alterations: she laid aside all the stiffnesses premeditated by her late husband, and studied the utility and ease of the soldier more than the smartness of his appearance. It was she who gave the commodious large trouser which the Cossacs now wear. Her son Paul again embraced the Prussian passion, entirely altering the system introduced by her, and making all around him German to the most violent excess. Indeed, the martial law, dress and parade attending every minute circumstance, civil and military, are too well known for me to descant on here. However, no fault can be found with the aspect of the present Russian soldier. His air is martial, and his general appearance admirable.

The heavy cavalry wear green uniforms, cut short in the Austrian fashion, with various facings. Their helmets are very high, crested with an enormous quantity of bristly hair; and the effect is altogether more that of an antique casque, than of a modern invention. White pantaloons have superseded the trousers; and so far from being on the *easy* plan, they girdle the wearer so tightly round the waist that you cannot look on him without being reminded of a wasp. This custom is not handsome; and by no means friendly to health, as the *encirclement* comes up so high on the body as to subject the soldier to great inconveniences; and, in the course of a little time, must produce the most serious consequences.

The infantry wear a similar coat with the cavalry; and have felt caps like our own, decorated with a feather formed of hair dyed black, green, or red. The sword and bayonet are girt round their loins; and a broad wide belt, crossing their left shoulder, carries the cartouch-box. This latter appendage belongs to all the troops. White cloth pantaloons and boots complete their apparel.



An Officer of the Imperial Foot Guards



A Soldier of the 'Imperial' - Port forwards

The Emperor Alexander being much attached to his army, and delighting to mark the emulation with which the officers strive to outstrip each other in their profession, takes great pains with his guards : and I think I may venture to pronounce that they are as fine a body of men as any crowned head in Europe can boast. They are of immense stature, warlike in their air, and remarkable for steadiness in all their duties. Their dress is green, like the rest of the infantry ; shewing their pre-eminence by no other difference than their colossal height, much increased by a high horse-hair feather in their cap. Their mustachios are nicely blacked and pinched ; and their whiskers, which are enormous, almost meet across the chin ; and being whitened with powder, impart a striking expression of ferocity to their countenances.

The life-guards of His Imperial Majesty are the *chevalier-guard*, and the *guard à cheval*. They are clothed in white with red capes and sleeves, and a huge high-crested helmet, the common cavalry belt with a long strait sword, and the stiff jack-boot. The officers are generally tall, but so thin and pinched at the waist that it is painful to see them move ; as the joining of their body to their hips seems held by so slender an adhesion, that one cannot but apprehend every succeeding motion may break it in twain.

One of the most superb regiments in the Russian service is that of the Hulans, commanded by the Archduke Constantine. He is particularly fond of it ; always wears the uniform, which is blue with red returns and gold ; and exercises it according to the Austrian system. The hussars, I understand, are no inconsiderable rivals to the magnificence of this corps ; but the dress of their officers I should think by much too rich : the most profusely decorated light dragoons we have in England, are

plain in comparison. The custom of loading military uniforms with expensive and needless ornaments is certainly wearing out; and a happy circumstance it is, both for the convenience and purse of the officers; and much rejoiced will every true soldier be, when he sees the army in general more usefully and less gaudily appointed. Indeed, so great a friend am I to the simplicity which seems so consonant with the military profession that, even where splendor is most admissible, when I have seen your full-dress of the guards at St. James's, I have thought its absolutely overlaying with gold lace, more becoming a monarch's page than one of the guardians of his safety. The most soldier-like and serviceable dress I have met with in any country is that of the Cossacs, for it contains every thing (excepting more appropriate arms), which is requisite in cavalry.

I am not yet sufficiently intimate with my subject to give you a just opinion of what may be all the virtues of a Russian soldier. The officers are in general full of high military honour; and, if we admit obedience to be the first qualification in the private, and no attempt to argue the propriety of any order received, to be the second, then certainly the Russian soldiers possess those excellences in full perfection. Taken from a state of slavery, they have no idea of acting for themselves when any of their superiors are by; hence, they are as ready to receive all outward impressions as a piece of clay in the modeller's hands; and that the hands of their modellers are not very idle, they daily feel on their heads and shoulders enforced by the cane.

Though humbled, the spirit of this hardy race is not subdued. It shews its latent manly powers in the field against the enemy: for there is not a braver set of men any where than the Russian soldiers. The

frequent wars between them and the Persians and Turks, who are such fierce combatants, gives them a wild ferocity in action, and accustoms them to the determination never to give way. This temper they carry into other countries, as the campaigns of Suwarroff and Bagration so gloriously testify.

The army is recruited by a tax on the nobility of so many slaves out of every hundred they possess. The number is regulated according to the exigencies of the state.

I have not been very profuse in my remarks on national character, because, I think I might as well decide on the general effect of a statue, by seeing only its leg or arm, as write confidently of the Russian manners, when I have penetrated no further than this city. Indeed, I know of no study so uncertain as that of individuals; and it is by a number of individuals that we judge of a people: and where we find it so difficult to gain a true knowledge of our own characters, we ought not to consider the task so easy to comprehend that of others. Some persons have a happy facility in seizing the characteristic points of a nation: and none was more eminently gifted with this power than Peter the First. I will transcribe a specimen; and instead of receiving the poor pittance of my opinion on one country, you shall be enriched with the judgment of so great an Emperor on several. It was his estimation of the foreigners whom he encouraged to come to his new capital.

“ You may give to a Frenchman (says he) liberal pay: he never amasses money, and loves pleasure. The case nearly answers to the German; only he spends what he labours for in good-living, not on the gay vanities of the Frenchman. To an Englishman more must be given:

he will enjoy himself at any rate; should he even call in to his aid his own credit. A Dutchman rarely eats enough to pacify nature; his sole object is economy: less, consequently, will serve him. An Italian is by nature inoculated with parsimony: a trifle, therefore, will do for him: almost out of nothing he will contrive to save; making no mystery of it, but acknowledging that he serves from home with no other view than to amass money to enable him to return with affluence to the heaven of Europe, his own dear Italy."

I am now preparing to make a visit to Mosco, the ancient capital of this empire. There, many of the oldest families of consequence reside; living in a state of lordly hospitality appropriate to their rank and highly honourable to their magnificence. From thence I shall send you more satisfactory accounts; being then enabled to speak more correctly on the native and unsophisticated manners of the Muscovite nation. Many hundred miles shall I travel before I again subscribe myself your faithful friend.

LETTER XVII.

Mosco, February, 1806.

THE Russian winter is now far advanced: and as the mode of travelling is so different from that of summer; and indeed from any thing practised in countries where the frost is less severe, I shall give you a view of our accommodations before we set out.

On February the twenty-second, *Old Style*, Mr. H. — of Northamptonshire and myself proposed for our mutual comfort that the trip should be made together. With passports properly registered, and an order to the post-houses to furnish us with horses to the number of seven, we began our movements. The expence of this licence is at the rate of a kopeck a verst for each animal, according to the number the traveller deems necessary to take him to the end of his journey. The receipts belong to government. To the furnisher of the horses at each stage, we afterwards pay two kopecks as his remuneration.

The vehicle we purchased for ourselves was a *Kabitka*; a well-contrived and snug machine, not dear, costing only thirty-five rubles, that is, five guineas British. Its form is simple, being nothing more than a large wooden cradle, fixed on a double keel or skate of the same material, strongly shod with iron. Our trunks were placed at the head and foot; and filling the intermediate space at the bottom with hay, mattresses, pillows, and other soft accompaniments, we wrapped our persons in

pelisses, furred boots, caps, &c. and laying ourselves prostrate, side by side, in the bed we had made, were ready to sally forth in as regular a northern array as any veteran of the Russian winter. Our domestics followed in a barouche, deprived of its wheels, the better to facilitate its union with the sledge; but, like many other ill-suited matches, the connexion became so uneasy to both parties that a separation was constantly threatened; and a most troublesome companion we found these *two made one* in our journey.

Being apprised that there were no decent inns on the road, we provided all sorts of conveniences for ourselves and *suite*. Indeed, we had received so terrible a description of the houses we were to stop at, while the horses were changing, that I feared from heat, smells, dirt, and vermin, that I should not be able to endure them a moment; and so took every precaution against entering them at all if it could be possible. These places were the dwellings of the post-masters, whose only article of nourishment for the wearied traveller is coffee or tea.

The mode of attaching the horses to this vehicle is different from that used on similar occasions in any other country that I have ever seen; they being harnessed (generally six in number) abreast, like the *chariots of old*. The traces are of ropes; and the driver sits on a box in front of the *kabitka*. The *steeds*, which thus imitate the fashion of the heroic ages, unfortunately in appearance are every thing that is wretched and mean: they are diminutive, with matted coats and clotted tails and manes: indeed, their aspect is so pitiable to an English eye, that you expect to see them stretched on the snow, never to rise again, long before they have measured half a dozen *versts*. With such exquisite halting places in perspective, and promising animals to draw us towards them, after a series

of inconvenient delays we at last, late in the day of the twenty-second, moved off.

We soon arrived at the barrier-gate, and producing our credentials to the officer on guard, were allowed honourable passage; and again putting our cattle to their speed, pressed forward towards the next stage with a swiftness incredible. We saw that our horses were like those of the Cossacs, of bad appearance but radical worth; and reclining in our cradle, committed ourselves to their guidance with feelings of confidence and ease most luxuriously delightful.

We had not travelled long before we found ourselves on an extensive plain of snow, bounded by black forests of birch and thick fir. The road was excellent; and the rapidity of our carriage seemed to increase rather than diminish with the distance. Before we reached the first post, we passed many travellers *embowelled* in like manner with ourselves; and also saw several curious-looking villages. As they all resemble each other in architectural arrangement, by describing one, I shall give you a tolerably accurate idea of the whole of these rustic residences throughout the empire. Scarcely any difference is distinguishable amongst them all, unless it may be in the size or materials of the church, or in its being built with or without a steeple.

The houses are constructed of wood, the walls being compiled of long round beams, or rather trunks of trees, bereft of their limbs and bark, laid horizontally one on the other with nicety and neatness. Not a nail is used in this erection; the building being so contrived as to be taken down at pleasure, and re-erected in a few hours on any other

spot. I am told that at Mosco there is a *house-market*, where you may purchase small villages *ready made*: villas also, and houses of every size and pattern, fill up this extraordinary magazine; so, that if any one happens to be burnt out in the morning, before night he may have a room at least erected at a cheap rate, to cover him.

Most of the villages consist of one street only, pretty wide, presenting to the eye a row of gable ends, resembling the ancient towns in Britain. In the wall, are windows of four panes of glass, with curious carved ornaments a-top; and on their shutters (which open outwards) a variety of flowers, stars, and strange devices are painted in the rudest taste, and often blended with gilding. The national admiration of painting and sculpture is every where manifested on the façades of the cottages. The latter is certainly the best executed; and in some of their wild carvings frequently may be discovered the germs of real talent. Every house has a gallery or ballustrading below, besides the roof projecting from the face of the building, to defend its inmates from the sun during summer, and the weather in the severer season. I understand that no habitations are cooler than these during the hot months, nor any warmer through the whole of the cold. A sort of double-gate separates each from its neighbour, and leads into a large court-yard filled with sheds, old kabitkas, and other carriages of the country; besides an accumulation of dirt, rotten straw, jaded horses, pigs, and other nuisances; completing a museum of nastiness scarcely to be found in any other civilized spot on the globe.

I have made a sketch of one of these villages which will assist you in comprehending my description. At the post-house you observe a pole,

on which is suspended a straw wreath and four or five tassels. I must plead ignorance of this emblem ; and on enquiring, I found the post-master no wiser than myself.

Nothing interesting presenting itself, we travelled onwards, through towns and villages, and over a dreary country, rendered ten thousand times more so by the season. All around was a vast wintry flat : and frequently not a vestige of man or of cultivation was seen, not even a solitary tree, to break the boundless expanse of snow. Indeed, no idea can be formed of the immense plains we traversed, unless you imagine yourself at sea, far, far from the sight of land. The Arabian deserts cannot be more awful to the eye, than the appearance of this scene. Such is the general aspect of the country during the rigors of winter ; with now and then an exception of a large forest skirting the horizon for a considerable length of way. At intervals, as you shoot along, you see openings amongst its lofty trees, from which emerge pictureque groupes of natives and their one-horse sledges, whereon are placed the different articles of commerce, going to various parts of this empire. They travel in vast numbers, and from all quarters, seldom fewer than one hundred and fifty in a string, having a driver to every seventh horse. The effect of this cavalcade at a distance is very curious ; and in a morning, as they advance towards you, the scene is as beautiful as striking. The sun then rising, throws his rays across the snow, transforming it to the sight into a surface of diamonds. From the cold of the night, every man and horse is encrusted with these frosty particles ; and the beams falling on them too, seem to cover their rude faces and rugged habits with a tissue of the most dazzling brilliants. The manes of the horses, and the long beards of the men, from the quantity of congealed breath, have a particularly glittering effect.

Novgorod was the first place of consequence that lay upon the road. On entering from the St. Petersburg side, a long high range of brick wall presents itself; the ruined towers and battlements, some of which are very interesting, being quite of a different character of fortification from that of any ancient fortress I had ever before beheld. The gilded minarets of the holy buildings, whose heads proudly shone in the heavens, formed a contrast, full of reflection, to this poor mutilated military *cestus*. I never saw in any place, however wretched, such forlorn effects from time and devastation as met my eyes on entering the town: so neglected, so poverty-stricken; houses falling into ruin, and whole streets, in some parts, one wide waste of desolation. Such is the present state of a city once the capital of the country; the residence of the earliest sovereigns of the empire; and a place so flourishing by grandeur and by commerce, as to give rise to the proverb: "God and the great city of Novgorod who can withstand?" The river Volkoff divides it, running into the lake Ilmen at a short distance from the town. This vast body of water was unfrozen in the centre when we crossed, owing to the extraordinary rapidity of the flood; and I am told that under the most severe frosts it seldom freezes. A very long bridge on boats, for the conveniency of removal on account of the ice, is thrown over the lake.

As this is one of the most ancient towns in Russia, (being the native place of the great Princess Olga, who assumed the empire in the year 945; and the chief city of its grand Princes for many a century, we can have no difficulty in crediting the traditional accounts of what was once its magnitude. At present, within seven versts from Novgorod, stands a monastery, behind which they say formerly extended the old walls; nay, the spot on which that church is built has been pointed out to me

as having been the centre of the "Great City." I could not see any ruins on this quarter to bear witness to the testimony.

Whilst our horses were preparing, my fellow traveller and myself paid a short visit to the cathedral of Saint Sophia. It was built near nine hundred years ago, by Vladimir, Prince of Novgorod ! The exterior is a dull collection of gloomy arches, decorated with gothically painted legends of Saints. Within, are relics, held in great veneration by the people ; monuments of departed princes, bishops, &c. : and high amidst the dim funereal light of the circling roof, the remains of silken banners : military, I suppose, from their form and station.

We were shewn a huge mill-stone, which is regarded with the most devout reverence on account of the wonders attached to its history. It is believed that St. Anthony used it as a raft in crossing the Levant, and then made it his vehicle to Novgorod ; where the people, astonished at such a miracle, were drawn to listen to his mission, and immediately embraced the doctrine taught by so manifest a messenger from Heaven. It is said, that in commemoration of his having introduced the Christian religion into this city, he founded the very monastery in which this precious relic now resides.

Neither my companion nor I being able to *swallow the mill-stone*, we took a civil leave of our expositors, and left the church. Returning to the post-house, we found our carriages ready ; and again placing ourselves within them, proceeded over many dreary tracks of snow till we reached Twer.

This town is the capital of a province of that name ; and is built at the

conflux of the Twertza and the Volga: the latter river is now celebrated for its fine fish; once upon a day it drew its fame from the warriors who encamped on its banks: but happy is the period when peace gives leisure for those pleasures to be noticed, which in times of war are passed over as the waves that flow along unseen or unregarded. The warrior's glory is an attractive light that we are all fond of grasping; but if it leads not to peace, and the honour of those for whom they fight, we are but troublers of the world, and rather deserve a halter than a laurel.

The city is much larger than that of Novgorod; and in ancient days was one of its proudest rivals. Yarastof the Third, the brother of Alexander Nefsky, received this principality as his inheritance; and transmitted the succession to a long train of descendants. Twer is divided into the old and new town. The former, situated on the opposite side of the Volga, consists of wooden cottages, and has rather a miserable appearance. But the latter having been burnt down in the year 1763, Catherine the Second no sooner heard of the calamity, than she ordered it to be re-erected on one of her own, healthy and beautiful plans. She was at the expence of rebuilding the governor's house, the bishop's palace, the courts of justice, the exchange, and other public buildings; and to engage the inhabitants to follow her models for the new town, she gave each of them a loan of three hundred pounds for twelve years, without interest. The money advanced by Her Imperial Majesty was sixty thousand pounds; and she afterwards remitted one-third of the sum. The streets are broad, open, and long; and the houses being brick stuccoed, and of a good architecture, they produce a very handsome effect. The same beneficent Empress founded a school here for the burghers' children; and an academy for the young nobility. There is also an ecclesiastical college. In short nothing that could be con-

ducive to the comfort, improvement, and prosperity of her people was neglected by this august Princess. If ever Sovereign deserved to be considered as the fostering parent of a nation, it was Catherine the Great. You may trace her name from one end of this vast empire to the other; not in cyphers written over doors and windows, but in acts of munificence and wisdom which fill us with the most unalloyed admiration. Who can bring to remembrance that Catherine in some cases felt too much like a woman, when in every public deed of her life (and they were unceasing), you see manifested the sage, the heroine, and the affectionate guardian of millions of people?

Twer is a place of considerable commerce, owing to its situation on the conflux of two such advantageous rivers. And perhaps on this account we found a very good inn, which was no trifling comfort; though we were detained, and imposed on too, by the clumsiness and roguery of the host. Our unlucky barouche, after a variety of disasters in its journey, here broke fairly down; and thus proved the folly of making use, in these regions, of any carriage that is not adapted to the roads and horses of the country. After much bungling we at length got the vehicle mounted on its skates; and I enquired of the landlord his demand for the share he had in the repairs; he coolly asked *thirty rubles!* So exorbitant a charge occasioned me to remonstrate: at this moment my servant came up (an honest Russ, who some time before had been made free); he enquired what was the matter. I told him the extortion of the man, and that I wanted to beat him down. "I'll beat him down!" cried he, catching the poor wretch by the beard; and laying upon his shoulders, with all his might, an immense bludgeon large enough to be called a club. As the terrified host swung round at the arm's length of my doughty champion, the blows fell like hail upon his back, while he

kept bawling out: "twenty, fifteen, ten, &c." till he reduced his demand to the more reasonable sum of two rubles. On this cry, like the last bidding' at an auction, the appraiser was satisfied, and the hammer fell. The poor battered wretch was released; and bowing with a grateful air to his chastiser, turned to me. Almost killed with laughing at so extraordinary a sight, I paid him his rubles. I was no less amused at the stupid indifference with which the standers-by regarded the whole transaction; and got into the *kabitka* to pursue our journey, debating with myself, whether the frequent drubbings these slaves endure, really reduces their flesh to the consistence of stock-fish; or whether the friendly sheep-skins on their backs do not blunt the force of blows, which otherwise threaten not only bruises but broken bones. The bow he made to my triumphant valet entertained me as much as any thing; and as we drove off, he repeated his *obusances* with as much respect as if we had given him a hundred ducats, instead of a few rubles and a drubbing into the bargain. What will you say to me for standing by to countenance such a scene? But in fact, my umpire took me so by surprise, and I was so convulsed with laughter at the oddity of the *groupe* they formed, and the whole was performed in so short a time, that I declare I had not power to stir from the spot or speak a word; and so for once allowed the ridiculous to get the better of my humanity.

We now hoped to proceed quietly to Mosco; but alas! we had not gone very far before the *barouche-sledge* shewed symptoms of disunion again; and at the village of Klin our servants had the extraordinary pleasure of another *summer-set* in the snow. While our plague was re-fitting, I left the management to the hero who had so well acquitted himself during the last affair, and entered the post-house. By way of

amusing my almost exhausted patience, as the apartment was rather curious, I made a sketch of the scene within. These dwellings being all alike, my drawing will present you with the image of their form and inhabitants; but my pen, reluctant to be idle in your service, insists upon bringing before your *mind's-senses*, its dirt, effluvia, and varieties of wretchedness. As the poet recommends *pomp to take paper*, perhaps it may not be less salutary now and then to give the delicacy of British organs a similar regimen! So, without further apology, I shall, notwithstanding my "damnable faces, begin!"

One room is the habitation of all the inmates. Here they eat; sleep, and perform all the functions of life. One quarter of it is occupied by a large stove or peech, flat at the top; on which many of them take their nocturnal rest; and during the day loll over its baking warmth, for hours, by threes and fours together, in a huddle, not more decent than disgusting. Beneath, is an excavation like an oven, used for the double duty of cooking their viands, and heating the dwelling to the desired temperature. The apartment I am describing, rendered insufferably stifling by the stove, the breaths, and other fumigations, contained the post-master, his wife, his mother, his wife's mother, an infant, and two men, apparently attached to the post department, as they wore green uniforms. There were others besides, who being rather withdrawn in a dark corner, we could not distinctly observe.

When we entered, the top of the oven was occupied by the three women and child, almost all in a state of nature. The youngest was extremely pretty, and seemed, though a mother, not more than fifteen. This is nothing surprising; as the warmth of these stoves acts upon the human

constitution as hot-houses do upon exotics. A bed with dirty curtains filled one corner of the room ; a few benches and a table, completed the furniture. The walls were not quite so barren, being covered with uncouth prints and innumerable daubings. In one spot was placed a picture or effigy of our Saviour and the Virgin, decorated with silver plates, stamped most curiously. From the ceiling was suspended a lamp, which during certain holy-days is kept continually burning. Having finished my sketch, we left this cyclopean den, not only to look into the state of our carriages, but to breathe a little fresh air, as its heat and stench became so pestiferous that we felt ourselves compelled to make our escape, or resign ourselves to suffocation. As we opened the door, the steam issued with us like smoke from the crater of a volcano.

While we stood by the repairing barouche, a priest came forth from the house we had quitted. He was a young, healthy, and good-looking man, with long and beautiful hair divided on his forehead, and flowing gracefully on each shoulder, in the style of Raphael's head. He addressed us in his native tongue, but finding us ignorant in that point, changed his eloquence to the Latin language ; and now being understood, he poured forth with such vehemence and inconsistency that we soon discovered he had been paying his devotions to a certain heathen deity, from whom he had received a most *spirited* afflatus ; so much so, that he seemed to forget both himself and the dignity of his profession. Indeed he pestered us so adhesively that we were glad to shake him off, even by darting back into the apartment of the post-master. He followed us in, proceeding as most men do who *take an enemy into their mouth to steal away their senses* ; and after a most tormenting half hour, he at last said something in his native tongue, unintelligible to us, but

so level to the understanding of the rest, that the females made their escape as if a shot had fallen amongst them. Our host seemed extremely angry; and, I suppose, intimated to the ecclesiastic that he desired his absence; for he turned round with a sullen reluctance, and proceeding towards the door, cast his eye on the painted effigy of our Saviour and his mother. He stopped suddenly, and with the greatest reverence crossed himself several times, and then left the place.

I cannot say the example of this pastor was very edifying to his flock, it being now one of their most sacred fasts in the Greek calendar, when it is infamous amongst the Russians not to abstain from all strong liquors. This man was a secular priest; and, I am told that many of the lower rank of that order are rather free in their modes of life. Not so with those of higher dignity: they are celebrated for qualifications quite the contrary; for purity of heart and sanctity of manners. I will evince my respect to them, by giving you the opinion of one who knew them well.

“The superior clergy at this time are men whose simplicity, candour, and primitive modesty, would have illustrated the first ages of Christianity. Their way of living, from the nature of their order, being all monks, is very rigid. And as it precludes them from mixing with the world, it is not to be wondered at that few of them should have that easiness of address which a frequent intercourse with society only can give. But their manners are gentle as their life is austere. Biassed by early education, they are perhaps a little too partial to the ceremonies of their own church; but they are far from being bigoted, or thinking there can be no salvation out of the pale of their own communion.

Their studies are almost totally directed to their profession, as no instance has yet been known of any of them excelling in the arts or sciences."

Not doubting but that you are as tired of the pastor of Klin as we were, I shall bid the subject adieu; and having once more re-entered our skating cradles, say farewell, till I again salute you from this city, with the beauties and hospitalities of Mosco.

LETTER XVIII.

Mosco, March, 1806.

AFTER six days and nights of weary travel, we arrived at Mosco on the twenty-ninth of February: but the weather being foggy, so entirely enveloped the city as to conceal a view from us which, I am told, for magnificence is not exceeded in Europe.

On delivering our letters of introduction, we were welcomed with all the courtesies of friendship; and at the first salutation, were made to forget, by the true politeness of this generous people, that we were strangers. I have heard it said that hospitality is a mark of barbarism. On what this opinion is grounded I cannot guess: but certainly it had not its foundation at Mosco; for I never saw, in any part of the world, such general polish of manners as in this city. Their hospitality appears to me to arise from a confidence in the friend who gives the introduction that he will not recommend any person unworthy of their notice; not doubting this, their benevolence hesitates not to receive the introduced with kindness: and from their love of society, if he prove agreeable, he soon finds himself on the most easy and pleasant terms with a large and elegant acquaintance. Hence, I am led to consider this disqualifying remark on hospitality, as one of those common-places which the ignorant adopt on the faith of others; and those others, if they be equally unreflecting, can only promulgate the like dogmas, as an excuse for some failing in themselves.

Fortunately for us, our arrival and the Prince Bagration's was nearly at the same time. We received cards from the English club (an association only so in name, not three of our nation belonging to it); inviting us to a dinner which they gave to the Prince in honour of his late gallant conduct with the armies.

The house appropriated to this entertainment was a palace which formerly had been the residence of Prince Gorgorin. Its suite of splendid saloons, and the great marble hall in which dinner was served, were fitted up with the most unsparing magnificence. At half-past two o'clock the Governor, General Becklachoff, and the Prince Bagration entered. The latter was immediately surrounded by all in the room, eager to express their joy at his presence, and congratulations to their country in being yet blessed with the preservation of such a man.

He is below the middle stature; of a dark complexion, deeply tinged with the climates in which he has served. His eye is small, quick and penetrating. His nose, a very high aquiline; and his face perfectly Georgian (he being of that country), expresses the most charming affability and sweetness. His demeanour is in unison with his countenance, being demonstrative of a modesty as winning as it is admirable in so idolized a character. He was dressed in a uniform wholly of green, covered with the insignia of many orders, stars, and a red ribbon.

The dinner was conducted with the nicest decorum; and the healths of the Emperor and the Prince Bagration were drunk with the greatest enthusiasm. In fact, I never saw a society of Russians so animated; and more than once it reminded me of similar meetings in honour of our glorious friend and hero Sir Sidney Smith. Indeed the sentiment

was so much the same, and the idea of one great man so naturally suggested those of others, that several of the Russian nobility present asked me if it were not like the *fêtes* we dedicate to our heroes. I acknowledged the resemblance; but inwardly gave them the palm of general politeness; a grace in which this assembly far exceeded ours: I never in my life experienced so much attention as was there paid to us as strangers and Englishmen. Three quarters of an hour finished the repast; previous to which a band of singers from a regiment quartered in the city, sung an air in honour of the Prince. The words I here present to you in a prose translation.

Friendship unites us here. Joy captivates each heart! Truth herself declares, that he is the hero who sacrifices himself to the Emperor and the empire, despising envy and malice, and who dedicates himself to justice.

Chorus.—Let us entwine him a crown of laurels, for he merits to wear it.

Unassisted by fortunate circumstances, he wrested honour from the arms of peril. He added not single rays to the glory of Russia, but surrounded it with a thousand beams. Hope dawned wherever his form appeared. Hosts failed to make him shrink; and with a few he overcame numbers.

Chorus.—Let us entwine him a crown of laurels, for he merits to wear it.

A hero's soul is satisfied with gratitude, all other recompense is foreign to his feelings. He despises luxury and pride, and all the vanities of the world. To serve mankind is his aim, and their happiness his reward. They who reap the renown of virtue, lose it not in the grave!

Chorus.—Let us entwine him a crown of laurels, for he merits to wear it.

Every regiment has its own vocal band. They sing in parts, accompanied by an instrument resembling a guitar, called a Ballalaika. The strains of this musical tribute to the Prince were wild and piercing;

something like the tones of the Eolian harp when the wind is disturbed and gusty. He received the song and the plaudits with a grace which again brought our *Cœur de Lion* before me. The air over, part of the company withdrew to cards; and part (in which latter choice I united) preferred a saloon, where several vocal and instrumental military bands were stationed, still further to amuse the Prince during the intervals of conversation. We had also the horn-music; which, as it is strange and curious, I will describe.

It was invented by a Prince Gallitzin, in the year 1762. This instrument consists of forty persons, whose life is spent in blowing one note. The sounds produced are precisely similar to those of an immense organ; with this difference, that each note seems to blend with its preceding and following one; a circumstance that causes a blunt sensation to the ear, and gives a monotony to the whole. However, the effect possesses much sublimity, when the *performers are unseen*: but when they are visible, it is impossible to silence reflections which jar with their harmony. To see human nature *reduced to such a use*, calls up thoughts very inimical to admiration of strains so awakened. I enquired who the *instrument* belonged to? (by that word, both *pipes* and *men* are included!) and was told it had just been purchased by a nobleman, on the recent death of its former possessor.

Some of these individuals, thus destined to drag through a melancholy existence, play at different times on several pipes of various sizes which breathe the higher notes. But the base pipes have each their unchanging blower: they are extremely long, and are laid upon a machine or trussel, close to which the performer stands, and places his mouth to the smaller extremity of the pipe in a horizontal position. The shape

is exactly that of a hearing trumpet: a screw is inserted near the bell of the tube, to give it a sharper or flatter tone, as may be required. The performers are in general thin and pale: and I have little doubt but that the quantity of air the instrument takes, and the practice necessary for perfection in execution, must subtract many years from the otherwise natural term of their lives.

The instrumental military bands which I have heard in this country, are very inferior to those of England or France: two essential things are wanting, good cymbals and large drums. The latter instruments are very defective in Russia; and the fifes fall far short of ours.

My introduction to Prince Bagration, who is not only one of the first of military heroes, but in his character as a man, is an honour to human nature, brought me to a sight the most degrading to our species. What a difference at once before my eyes! a great warrior, on whom all eyes were fixed with admiration; and a set of poor mechanized wretches, reduced to the level of a child's whistle! Indeed, I was moved with the most distressing pity when I looked upon them. But this was not enough; I was to see the varieties of destiny yet more manifested, in the formation and fortunes of a race of rational beings called dwarfs. They are here the pages and the play-things of the great; and at almost all entertainments stand for hours by their Lord's chair, holding his snuff-box, or awaiting his commands.

There is scarcely a nobleman in this country who is not possessed of one or more of these frisks of nature; but in their selection, I cannot say that the *noblesse* display their gallantry, as they choose none but males. Indeed, to excuse them, I must confess, that amongst all the

unappropriated dwarfs I have seen, I never met with one female of that diminutive stature. I am told that these pigmy forms are very rare with women; and much to the honour of nature is the exception in their favour, as you will agree with me that the charms of the lovely sex are too valuable to be so sported. How do we pity one of these tiny men, cut off from the respectabilities of his manhood by the accident of stunted growth! What should we not then feel, to see a fairy form of the other sex shut out, by a similar misfortune, from all those varieties of happiness which belong to the tender associations of a wife and a mother? I confess my compassion would be rather painful; and am very glad that as yet I have seen the calamity entailed on the harder sex only, who are best able to contend with its cheerlessness and discomforts.

These little beings are generally the gayest drest persons in the service of their lord; and are attired in a uniform or livery of very costly materials. In the presence of their owner their usual station is at his elbow, in the character of a page; and during his absence, they are then responsible for the cleanliness and combed-locks of their companions of the canine species.

Besides these lilliputians, many of the nobility keep a fool or two, like the *motleys* of our court in the days of Elizabeth; but like in name alone; for their wit, if they ever had any, is swallowed up by indolence. Savoury sauce and rich repasts swell their bodies to the most disgusting size; and lying about in the corners of some splendid saloon, they sleep profoundly, till awakened by the command of their lord to amuse the company. Shaking their enormous bulk they rise from their trance, and supporting their unwieldy trunks against the wall, draw out their

heavy nonsense, with as much grace as the motions of a sloth in the hands of a reptile-fancier. One glance was sufficient for me of these imbruted creatures; and, with something like pleasure, I turned from them to the less humiliating view of human nature in the dwarf.

The race of these unfortunates, is very diminutive in Russia, and very numerous. They are generally well-shaped, and their hands and feet particularly graceful. Indeed, in the proportion of their figures, we should nowhere discover them to be flaws in the economy of nature, were it not for a peculiarity of feature, and the size of the head, which is commonly exceedingly enlarged. Take them on the whole, they are such compact, and even pretty little beings, that no idea can be formed of them from the clumsy deformed dwarfs which are exhibited at our fairs in England. I cannot say that we need envy Russia this part of her offspring: it is very curious to observe how nearly they resemble each other; their features are all so alike that you might easily imagine that one pair had spread their progeny over the whole country.

The dwarf of the Governor-general of Mosco is about forty years of age, has a good-tempered countenance; but his features and expression have an appearance to the eye as if he washed his face with alum water. I know not whether you can understand the effect that I mean. It is a sort of wizened, sharp look; inconceivable, I believe, unless you saw it. However, this crudeness does not extend to his disposition; his master assured me that he is cheerful, docile, and of a remarkably gentle temper. His height is forty-two inches. The next of his race that excited my attention, was one who measured forty inches and a quarter; he was twenty-five years of age, gay and sensible. He was the property of a naval officer. Count Alexey Orloff has one or two, much more

juvenile, who are several inches shorter than the above. All, however, that I have yet seen are inferior in beauty and delicacy of proportion to the little Polish Count we visited last spring in London. His head was hardly too large; and the sprightly ease of his finely turned lilliputian limbs was remarkably elegant. His conversation, you remember, surprised us both; for it evinced, that the diminutiveness of his body had not cramped the growth of his mind. We thought him a very interesting as well as odd little personage. His Russian brethren are known to live to a great age. One (a female!) died very lately at St. Petersburg, who had been a favourite with Peter the Great.

During the reign of that Monarch, his sister Natalia collected all the dwarfs from around the capital, in order to celebrate the marriage of two; and the rite was solemnized with much folly and pomp. The number of the assembly amounted to ninety-three, all displayed in open carriages, adapted to their size, and drawn by the smallest horses that could be found. Many were brought from Shetland for the purpose. A magnificent entertainment and ball were given at court; and, to complete the absurdity, the Princess, attended by the nobility, conducted the little pair to a state bed. Whether the union produced any *hopes* and *anxieties* to bless or plague the pigmy couple, is not recorded. And I believe this instance is the only one known, of a marriage between these hints of men and women.

Giants are also in request here: but they are not very numerous; and in stature fall far short of those which occasionally visit England from her sister Island.

Having run you through such a legend of princely banquets, fairy

revels, &c. &c. I shall leave you to your repose; either to dream of the brave Prince Arthur and the elfin court, or to people your slumbers with the more terrific *fee-fa-fums* of many an enchanted castle. I assure you, the sight of a couple of these giants standing within the superb hall of a Russian nobleman, and the oddly caparisoned dwarfs, ushering you to the presence of their lord; would not a little strike you with its resemblance to a scene in romance. Adieu! ever in truth, your faithful friend.

LETTER XIX.

Mosco, April, 1808.

MOSCO is luxuriantly situated on an extent of country rather irregular, having in its spacious champaign a few rising grounds. Of all cities I ever beheld it is the most curious and un-European. On viewing it from an eminence you see a vast plain, as far as the eye can reach, covered with houses, even to the very horizon; where the lofty towers of gorgeous palaces, and the glittering steeples of churches, sparkle in the sky.

The city is built on the banks of two rivers, the Moskva (whence it takes its name), and the Yausa. Mosco was anciently divided into five districts; and as they in part yet retain their distinctions, you will have a clearer idea of this colossal town by having a description of these partitions. They lie one within the other. The interior circle is called the Kremlin, a Tartarian word for *the fortress*. The Kitaigorod, or Tartar town, is the second circle. The Biel-gorod called so (the white town) from a wall of that hue which surrounds it, is the third. The fourth circle is named Zemlenoi-gorod from its earthen rampart. The slobodes, or suburbs, inclose all these, and form the extremest boundary of Mosco.

The Kremlin stands in the centre of the city on an elevated bank of the Moskva. Within its walls stands the ancient palace of the Tzars:



rendered particularly interesting from the circumstance of its having been the residence of Princes, whose names need only be mentioned to command the homage of every heart loyal to true kingly virtue. Mikhaila Romanoff, Alexey Mikhailovitch, Feodor; and the Great Peter, once inhabited these towers; and still sanctify them by their memories. The appearance of the palace is venerable; but it contains nothing of any consequence to see.

The cathedrals around the palace, which I understand are five in number, besides convents, parish churches, and colleges, give it rather a monastic solemnity. These are all richly endowed, and ornamented in the most costly manner. In one of the churches lie the remains of the Prince Demetrius who was so cruelly murdered, and is now regarded as a saint. Along with his relics repose those of several Grand Princes and Tzars. Their tombs are of stone, covered with palls of scarlet velvet superbly embroidered. The cathedral dedicated to the *Ascension*, possesses a perfect treasury of religious consecrations; and it is distinguished above the rest, in being the place where all the Emperors of Russia are crowned. Not far from the cathedral is the Synodal Palace, where formerly the patriarchs dwelt, and which now contains an invaluable library. Near to that is the Senate House, a magnificent building erected by Catherine the Second. And also the arsenal, a strong compact edifice. The Kremlin is parted from the Tartar town by a brick wall whitened, very high, and embattled in the eastern manner. My sketch of the city and this fortress will shew you the form of the fortification. At various distances are towers, square and round, with spiral minarets, covered with scaly tiles like the skin of fish, painted green, yellow, and crimson, surmounted with a gilded ball and fane. It is curious to observe the similarity between this turreted bulwark and

the well-known Chinese wall, so well pourtrayed in Lord Macartney's account of his embassy to China. The resemblance is so close, that we might think the same engineer had exerted his abilities in both countries.

Before I left the precincts of this interesting place, I ascended the tower of the church of Ivan the Great, which commands a view of the whole surrounding plain. Although the monotonous paleness of winter then shrouded its bosom, yet the *coup-d'œil* was transcendently magnificent. The sun shone with unattempered splendor through an atmosphere, whose clearness cannot be conceived in England; the variegated colours on the tops of innumerable buildings; the sparkling particles of snow on the earth and palaces; the fanes and crescents of the churches flashing their blazing gold; and, added to all, the busy world beneath, passing and repassing in their superb dresses and decorated sledges, presented such a scene of beauty and grandeur, that I should have thought myself repaid for my disagreeable journey, had I even been obliged to return to St. Petersburg immediately, in beholding so glorious a view.

The Kitai-gorod, the second division, is built round the Kremlin. Some, by that term, mean to call it the Tartar city; and others, the Chinese town. I have not acquired Russ enough to tell you whether the word Kitai equally applies to China and to Tartary: but that both nations have a pretence to naming it, we all know; the Tartars by their conquests; and the Chinese from the great commerce they once held with Mosco. This district, by way of eminence, is usually called *Gorod, the City*; and is surrounded with a wall and other fortifications. From the number of its shops and warehouses, and the Asiatic apparel

of the buyers and sellers, it reminded me of what I had read of Bagdat in the time of the Caliphs, when the chief merchants of the East used to assemble in its populous streets. The number of shops and warehouses which compose this mart, are nearly six thousand.

There are some colleges in this city, and many private residences, amongst the most spacious of which is the house of Count Tcheremetieff. Its churches are mostly on the plan of those of St. Petersburg, of which, I believe, I formerly gave you a sketch. Some in this district are of the ancient architecture; and others, built in more modern taste, are grotesque imitations of Greek and Roman temples: and yet, notwithstanding their defects, they form not an unpleasing variety with the Asiatic structures around. The effect of the latter edifices is picturesque and splendid. The great mass or body of the church is square, ornamented with small semicircular arches and columns, similar to our Saxon architecture. This buildings is surmounted by five minarets, one at each end, and a larger in the middle, shaped like an inverted balloon. They are all magnificently covered with ducat gold. A high gilt cross rises from the centre, beneath which is a crescent, a mark of triumph over Mahometanism both religious and military. When the Tartars, to whom Moscovy was subject two centuries, profaned any of the churches with their worship, they fixed the crescent, the badge of their prophet, upon its pinnacle. On Mosco being regained to the empire by the Grand Prince Ivan Basilovitch, he did not tear down the crescent, but planted the cross above it as a memorial of his victory. Not many paces from the main body of the church stands a narrow and higher tower of a different form from the minarets, being pyramidical. This contains the bells; and they are sounded by pulling their tongues against their sides; hence it is not difficult to toll those of the most enormous size.

These machines are at work the greater part of the day ; but very lucky it is both for the steeples and the town that they are not struck in the English fashion : half the belfries would have been down by this time, and all the people in the city driven deaf. Imagine the bells of a thousand churches (with five at least in each), clanging all at once, without harmony or variety ; for they never ring in peals ! The noise, in quality, is as bad as marrow-bones and cleavers ; and in quantity, more uproarious than any thing I can conceive since *Big Tom* at Oxford bereft the university of their hearing, and broke all the windows in the town.

Over the grand entrance of the church, is usually painted the legend of the Saint to whom it is dedicated. The inside is embellished in a similar taste, with gothic ornaments, and pictures imitated from Albert Durer, in a style not likely to rescue the fame of the Russian artists. The most remarkable church in Mosco for these internal decorations, is within this circle. It was the production of an Italian architect, brought from Italy by the tyrant Ivan Basilovitch on purpose to build him a church. On his arrival, the Monarch gave him orders to erect an edifice that should be unequalled in taste and splendor throughout the world. Ivan was obeyed. The fabric was finished ; and all Mosco crowded to express their admiration of its perfections. The poor artist's head could not bear such a whirlwind of adulation ; and being complimented by a lord of the court on having produced a proof of his skill that never could be equalled, his intoxicated vanity dictated this unfortunate reply ;

“ It is nothing to one I could yet build ! ”

This declaration reached the ears of the Tzar. The Italian was sum-

moned; and the tyrant, repeating what he had heard, added, "I shall put it out of your power to make any other country boast a church more splendid than mine." And immediately had the wretched man's eyes thrust out in his presence.

Time and circumstances are powerful changers of taste. I looked at this wondrous structure with all my *admiration* directed to the stupidity of the artist, and the blindness of the Prince, in not discovering it to be the most clumsy, cumbersome, and hideous mass that ever disgraced a civilized country. I am almost inclined to believe that the turn of the story should be reversed; and that the tyrant, struck with the failure of his plan, determined to deserve the world's gratitude in one act at least, by rendering so vile an architect incapable of again burthening any part of the earth with the like specimen of ignorance, bad taste, and absurdity.

Biel-gorod, called the White Town from its ramparts, but formerly Tzaref (the city of the Tzars), surrounds the foregoing division; and consists of numerous monasteries, seventy churches, the university founded by the Empress Elizabeth, the foundling hospital, and many public institutions, besides the spacious dwellings of some of the ancient princely families and other nobility.

Semlenoi-gorod, so called from its earthen boundary; and the slobodes or suburbs, form the outward girdle of this immense city; and in their numerous and antiquated streets shew all the varieties attached to a great capital: on one side splendid mansions; on the other dingy hovels filled with all the depressing effects of bondage. The pleasantest parts of these suburbs are inhabited by Germans; and also a band of

noble Georgians, who, with a large train of followers, retired hither. The districts allotted to these strangers partake of their character, and are very interesting.

It is now upwards of six weeks since I arrived in this city ; a month of which was passed under all the rigors of winter, when the snow lay four feet deep in many of the streets, and the long lines of the frozen rivers, and the surrounding country, were covered with the same deathly garb. But in a moment, as if by an act of an echanter's wand, a universal thaw dissolved the whole. Thousands of boors were seen breaking up with their hatchets the large masses of dissolving ice, and carrying it in their single horse sledges to the river, the sooner to make the ways passable, and rid them of their winter *shoub*.

During this operation, the road became extremely bad, having unavoidably, till all was cleared off, at different intervals, holes of a great depth, to the imminent peril of the passenger, whether in carriage or *en traineau*. Walking, at this season, is deemed a disgrace : and it is very well that prejudice sets so firmly against any attempt to change the mode, as it would be dangerous in the extreme : its inconveniences could hardly be balanced. In the first place, to prevent the inveterate penetration of the snow-water you must swathe your feet and legs in bandages of a hundred folds ; and then thrust them into huge machines of most uncouth Russian materials, before you durst venture to set one foot to the ground in such a toe-destroying element. Common leather boots would be as mere blotting paper, and soaked through in an instant. Then imagine all the muddy embroidery, which would skirt your pelisse even to the middle of your back, where the melting snows from the neighbouring houses, would greet it, like the meeting waters

in Noah's flood. If you walk near the sides of the houses (the most eligible place in England), your death is threatened every moment. Here, during the long winter, the icicles accumulate to such a number and size, and hang in such a tremendous fringe from the eaves, that their appearance alone is sufficient to intimidate the boldest pedestrian. And yet some have been so rash that I have heard of frequent instances of persons passing under them at the commencement of the thaw, who, by the falling of these immense masses were crushed to pieces. Their weight is incredible. The snow is not only annoying, but equally perilous with the ice; and, as it slides by degrees to the bend of the roof, in some unexpected moment is precipitated in a sort of *avalanche* into the street below. I saw three natives, who were trudging by at the instant of a *chute de neige*, all embowelled at once. A considerable time was spent in digging them out, when they were brought forth, to a miracle alive, but much hurt.

It is a very amazing spectacle to observe how rapidly this frigid covering vanishes, and how soon the smiling face of spring appears. In one day the Moskva became liquid, and no trace of winter remained on its waters, except where floating masses of ice, and the fragments of dismantled cottages rolling down its current, reminded you of the yet recent devastations of its departing wrath. The disunited snows from the higher lands usually come down into the lower in such quantity, and with such violence, that cattle, men, and often whole villages are swept away. The rivers receive the dreadful deposit; and thus, on the banks of the Moskva, at the moment when spring promises every vernal joy, you behold the wrecks of devastation, the memorials of a mischief and misery incalculable.

A great part of the city lying very low, was for several days under

water ; but now all is cleared, and the trees are ready to bloom. It is hardly eight days since the thaw began, and there is scarcely a particle of snow to be found. What a fortnight ago was a dreary plain of ice, is now robed in verdure, and animated with budding trees and shrubs. The whole aspect of the city is so changed, that no one who did not witness the moment of alteration could believe it to be the same place. Mosco in summer and Mosco in winter has as much resemblance, as a butterfly to its chrysalis. At present it is like a world of palaces collected together : and really the idea given of it by Joseph the Second of Austria, who paid it a visit, is a better picture than I can draw.

“ Here, (said he) have all the chief lords of the empire set themselves down, surrounded each by his village, his church, and his vassals.”

The description is just ; for it is not a city of houses in mere rank and file of streets, but rather a collection of mansions, each embosomed amidst its own lawns, gardens, pleasure-grounds, and the dwellings of its necessary slaves. Some of the most ancient Princes of the empire have very splendid palaces in Mosco, ornamented with basso relievo, gilding, and every Asiatic decoration. Indeed this is a favourite residence with almost all the Russian nobility who have not employments at court or in the government. And from the great influx of inhabitants, you see many of their fine houses yet unfinished without, while the inside boasts every splendor which taste can present, and every hospitality in the power of kindness to offer. No Englishman can speak too sensibly of the attentions which the Moscovite nobility pay to the individuals of his nation. It is even more gracious than the most refined

courtesy ; possessing all its graces, it carries to your heart the more delightful conviction of an animated friendship.

Owing to the peculiar circumstances of the inhabitants of this town, pleasure is ever the order of the day : it holds a continual carnival, where balls, private theatres, masquerades, and assemblies of all sorts, for ever vary the scene. The grounds around the mansions of the nobility afford romantic and charming morning walks. But their favorite amusement, is what they call the *promenade*. It consists of all the carriages in the city, perhaps to the number of seven thousand, trailing after each other in regal procession, through fixed parts of the town and its environs. The insides of these vehicles are filled with all the beauty and splendor of Mosco; and in my life I never beheld so many lovely women at one time.

The superiority of this metropolis over that of St. Petersburg, in the general beauty of the females, is beyond comparison. Perhaps this may be accounted for, from the intermarriages of the noble families with those of countries celebrated for symmetry of features and graceful forms : namely, Circassia, Georgia, and Poland. The young ladies dress in rather the Parisian mode, but much improved by their own native taste. Their evening attire is in a more beautiful style than that of any other country : but in the morning dress, the fair of our own country have the advantage.

Before I came into this country, I was led to believe that I should find the morals on a par with France. To me it seems totally the reverse. I never saw married people more happy, or apparently more affectionate towards each other : I never, in any country, met with young

women more amiable and virtuous. Every country has its *mauvais sujets*! And anciently, as an unlimited licence to pleasure was given here, and exemplified by those high in influence, it might be supposed that the seeds of libertinism, once sown in a nation, could never be eradicated; but it grew so rank during its short season, that I believe all is exhausted, and that the last generation carried with them into the other world not only the fruits but the roots of their cultivation. In short, it appears from what I have hitherto been able to judge, that for a city whose sole object is pleasure, Mosco possesses less of what is called fashionable vice, than may be found in countries where more seeming austerity is practised.

The *promenade* I have just mentioned, or more properly speaking the *cavalcade*, generally begins at the termination of the six weeks' fast. Many do indeed religiously abstain from food, in a manner that produces very alarming effects. After the sparest diet, with a weakened system, when the fast expires, they return to their usual full tables with an avidity which, unchecked, lays the foundation for numerous disorders. The female sex, particularly, are sufferers, who throwing themselves from a cloistered regimen and retirement immediately into repletion, and the stream of these equipages; thinly clad, and staying out late with open windows amid the damps of the evaporating earth, catch such colds as either end their days or embitter their lives. Medical men tell me that at this *witching time* of the year, there is more sickness, death, and misery, than at any other period in their practice.

Were such a concourse of carriages to assemble in our island, as here meet on the banks of the Moskva, fractured poles, broken sides, and maimed coachmen, footmen, &c. would be the certain consequences:

but a most admirable police is instituted both here and at St. Petersburg, to prevent all confusion and disaster. This authority is invested in a detachment of soldiers, who having an imperious command over the procession, not only add to its magnificence but insure its safety.

Having escaped from this blaze of beauty without catching fire, and from the steaming earth without catching an ague, I call on you to congratulate on such a double miracle, your very affectionate friend.

LETTER XX.

Mosco, May, 1806.

THE first week in the vernal month of May! At this gay season, when pleasure wooes me in as many shapes as ever Armida assumed to charm away the wits of the doughty Rinaldo, I cut my way through all her wiles; if not by a hero's sword, at least with a friend's pen-knife: and having pointed my quill, place myself firmly behind the shield of a sheet of paper, determined to fill it with a thousand of the enchantress's spent darts, before she draws me away from half an hour's converse with you!

You will not marvel at my *heroics*, when I tell you that I have just escaped from the very spell-bound wood of the fair magician! But I will relate all in order: and beginning with the usual style of long-winded story letters, *you must know* that the first of May is the brightest day in the Russian calendar of festivities. A wood, some versts from Mosco, is the spot dedicated to this annual enjoyment. The trees are already clothed with leaves, and the groves and bowers into which the sylvan scene is divided, are blooming with flowers, and every decoration that Pleasure, and her hand-maid Taste, can devise. To this spot all steps are directed: and once more the long procession of carriages sets forth. By the way, I must check my reins a moment, to tell you how your remark "that good rulers ought to turn even the pleasures of the people to the advantage of the state," has been honoured *à priori* in

Russia. Peter the Great instituted these cavalcades to make a part in all public festivities, that the building of carriages, and other manufactures useful in such shows, might be encouraged by more than an ordinary consumption. His plan took the desired effect, for the equipages are splendid to the utmost of their owner's stretch of fancy and purse: at this time the nobles try to outvie each other both in carriages and cattle. The caparisons are unusually gorgeous; and the result is remarkably fine, as they never drive fewer than four horses of the most admirable beauty. The servants are habited in dresses covered with gold and other costly materials; and the occupiers of the carriages sparkle in all their orders: the men according to their rank, and the ladies adorned with every charm of nature and taste.

The procession formed a string of several miles in length, taking its course through avenues of lofty fir-trees, broken by a variety of romantic openings, amid which were seen the joyous groupes of rugged natives and their gaudily dressed wives. At the appointed vernal spot, amongst the natural bowers of the wood, were planted *marquées*, belonging to the different nobility, filled with every species of elegant refreshment, and all sorts of amusements which could add to the exhilaration of the scene. This gay day ended with a *fête champêtre* given by the illustrious nephew of Suwarroff. It was the best fancied entertainment of the sort I ever saw; and so pleasant, that I hardly thought I had been there an hour, when the blaze of innumerable fire-works announced it to be midnight. Dancing and a splendid supper finished the festival.

The day following happening to be the anniversary of the birth-day of the young Countess Orloff (the daughter of Count Alexey Orloff, the

victor at Chesma, so well-known in the reign of Catherine II.), she became the lady of that day's revels. She is amiable and accomplished, and in every respect reflects honour upon her rank and fortune.

I obeyed her summons, about two o'clock in the day; and found the superb mansion of her father already filled with the most distinguished nobility in Mosco. Stars blazed in all directions, ribbons crossed the eye at every turn; and uniforms of various colours, enriched with gold and silver, gave a magnificence to the whole not to be described. The ladies were arrayed in all their diamonds, pearls, and beauty, both real and artificial, and congratulated the young heiress most warmly on her birth-day.

A sumptuous dinner, or banquet, spread with the luxury of an imperial repast was next in rotation. Music, vocal and instrumental, resounded from all sides: and when the health of the lady was drunk, a flourish of kettle-drums and trumpets rent the air, and peals of ordnance (to those who saw them not) reduced by their thunder the roar of festivity to the murmuring of distant merry-making.

I happened to be gone into an adjoining room at the moment of one of these explosions, and most unluckily for their future effect on my senses, got a *peep behind the scenes*. I found that these repeated seeming discharges of cannon were produced by an accumulation of 'cows' bladders distended with wind, and rapidly laid in succession on large blocks of wood, where, with the velocity of a steam-engine, they were burst at once by the action of a ponderous mould or mallet. A friend of mine stood near me, and observed with a smile, that we were now let into

the theatrical secret of *flourishes of drums and trumpets*, and *the reports of sundry pieces of ordnance* !

Indeed, I believe, my good Lord Hamlet, that even thine own Shakspeare will not be able to check my mirth, should I again hear the regicide-king drinking the health with

“ ————— Give me the cup !

“ And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,

“ The trumpet to the cannonier without,

“ The cannons to the heavens !”

For the life of me I shall not be able to forget the cows' bladders, and so with the “ruined feelings” of poor Tilburina, in a burst of laughter must add my peals to those of the ordnance.

* Not doubting but that you admire the ingenuity of the invention, I must account to you for its having been necessary. When I first saw it, I was ignorant that it might not have been a particular fancy of the Count Orloff's ; but, on enquiry, I found that during the reign of the whimsical Paul, an order was issued that no cannon should ever be fired in the empire but on imperial occasions. This ukase has never been repealed ; and as the higher order of nobility had always, until that period, the privilege of discharging guns on their great days, they determined not to give up the martial sound, and therefore elected the cow's bladders in their place.

About five o'clock in the afternoon this *firmament of stars* made a transit to a race-course two versts from the house. It was arranged in imitation of ours ; and the horses started in a similar style, excepting

the appearance of the riders, who neither in neatness nor activity equalled the English jockey. It seemed amusing to the Russians, but to me it was very dull ; there being neither spirit in the contest nor sport in the race. The cattle were British, as His Excellency's stud is well-chosen and extensive.

The evening terminated with a superb ball, in which the Countess, as usual, displayed her urbanity and accomplishments. In fact, the day's entertainments were altogether worthy of the charming object of their celebration. I will not tantalize you, who are such an admirer of *harmony and grace, and gentlest beauty*, with the naming of any of those transcendent fair who were present ! And yet why should I not ? You are no churl of loveliness, no eastern despot, that will not permit another eye to rest upon the charms of your adoration ; so, I will be equally liberal, and shall even tell you that many were the beauteous faces on which my sight banqueted on the sweet Countess's birth-night. One, two, three lovely creatures, who might have rivalled the shepherd of Ida's contending goddesses, were present amidst nymphs almost as fair : but there yet was a planet brighter than even Venus to me ; and her name you know, so I need not repeat it here. She was my guiding star through all the mazes of this happy festival ; and as I walked or sat by her side, I saw in her all the fascinations of Russia, France and Italy, blended with the interesting modesty of my dear native England.

With so sweet a partner in my hand I must speak a little of the dance here most in fashion : it is called a *country dance* ; but I cannot say that it resembles ours either in figure, music, or sociability. We preferred conversation : and surely the conversation of an intelligent and amiable

woman is the most delightful pleasure in nature! Old folks say that the young can never meet without love or matrimony coming on the carpet: so you will not be surprised that in my converse with so many youthful beauties, I should get a little into their secrets.

They tell me that during the single state of the Russian ladies (which I may call their childhood, they generally marry so early), they are held by their parents in the strictest subjection; and in the regal style, are disposed of in marriage according to the will of the ruling powers. From that moment they are free. The parental shackles are thrown off, and they enjoy their liberty in the full plenitude of gaiety and innocence. Their husbands do not controul them with any jealous fears. Ignorant of vice, these charming women may be as lively and as happy as they will. There is a frankness, and even affection, in their manners to their male friends and acquaintance which is particularly attractive; and causes you to feel as if you were living in the patriarchal days, and in the company of half a hundred lovely and endearing sisters.

One custom, however, I must put in my protest against; the common and public use to which the delicate and heavenly seal of friendship and love is diurnally appropriated! It is not sufficient that the fair sex salute each other, or touch your cheek; but no bearded boor meets his fellow, but forty smacks are heard, as though each were sucking cyder through a vent-peg. Every man, young, old, lame, blind, or ever so disgusting, when he kisses the hand of any woman, let her delicacy be ever so nice, or her rank exalted, she must return the salute on his cheek. This is done at every interview, although little intimacy may exist between the parties. When a lady would only cur-

tesy a welcome in England, she must kiss it here; a custom which (though we are not ungrateful in its observance) I believe there is not a John Bull of us all that would not feel a little awkward in seeing either his wife, sister, or daughter, do honour with such liberal greetings to his guests. 'This strange wantoning with the sweetest pledge of tenderness, is here scattered yet more widely immediately after the expiration of the six weeks' fast. 'The ceremony of giving eggs then commences; and whoever presents one, let him be of ever so low an order, to a lady of whatever high rank, on saying the words *Christos vos Christ*, must take a kiss from the lady and exchange eggs with her.

The night for the celebration of this custom, being the anniversary of the resurrection of our Lord, a grand ceremony is performed at midnight, in the cathedral of the Kremlin, which is attended by vast multitudes. A picture of our Saviour, which had been previously buried three days before, is raised with great solemnity; and then, as if directed by a stroke of electricity, the congregation all kiss each other without discrimination, and with much riot, bawling the above words. I was not an eye-witness of the scene, being ill; but my friend H——, who beheld, and experienced the labial contact, first from the lips of a blooming damsel, and next from the whiskers of a grisly boor, described it to me, with what *delightful remembrancers* you can easily conceive.

Thus far, you may understand what is kissing religiously. But so frequently is the rite administered, that had Coriolanus travelled amongst the Russians instead of the Volcii, he must have knocked down half the empire before he would have been allowed to preserve the *virgin kiss* he

carried back to his Virgilia. Kissing being a sort of system in this country, is conducted in due order, and arranged in classes.

First, the kiss religious. It stands highest in degree, and is of widest privilege, being used only at sacred periods ; but during the holy seasons, under its passport, the veriest clown may find his way to the cheek of the loveliest or most illustrious woman in the empire. In fact, it is an absolute *passe partout*. The second is in my mind the sweetest, and it is the rarest ; but it has many a counterfeit, for its soft touch unites in one moment lips, heart, and soul. It is of divine origin ; angels embalm the mouth it presses ; and it is called — need I name it? — the kiss of love ! It is known to exist ; but as its delicate nature never allows it to be practised in public, and as my present observations are only made there, you cannot reasonably expect that I should say a word more on the subject. Hence, my good friend, I shall leave its charms to your own imagination. The kiss platonic, or the kiss of friendship, is almost as dear as the former, though not quite so sweet : this, I may safely confide with you too. But the kiss promiscuous, which is the last ; what shall I say of it ? Cold, cold ! but executed with grace by the well-bred : and it is perfected by acquired elegance and practice, it being the constant ceremony at all interviews between men, women, and children. The merchants, slaves, &c. are as expert at it as the greatest lord ; I mean in promptitude and activity ; as for grace, it has not yet gravitated so low. You will frequently see a couple of huge hulking fellows with greasy grisly beards, kissing and snacking, locked in each others arms, as if they were meeting after an interval of ages.

Indeed there are many sights exhibited in this country very strange to

a British eye ; and none more so to me than when I look from the great Russian noble in all the power of wealth, to the poor vassal in his train ; who has not even an hour's liberty at his own command. Although I have been in this part of the world upwards of six months, I cannot yet prevail on myself to consider the Russian servant like the helots of the Spartans, as of a species so different from their masters, that to treat them like a horse or any other useful animal, is to pay them respect enough. There is something in the air of Britain which infuses into the generality of her sons as great a repugnance to make a slave, as to be one. Blessed, then, be the land of liberty ! for it dispenses the good it enjoys ; and by leaving every man free, allows him the rank in creation nature intended. Genius, industry, virtue, all find their proper spheres : and easily pass from the lower stations, into which accident might have placed them, to regions better calculated for the exercise of their powers.

That the Russian peasantry and servants are slaves, does not imply that their owners are tyrants. In most cases their comforts are very properly attended to ; and cruelty or oppression is very seldom suffered to embitter their existence. You never hear them complain : and in fact they rarely have any cause of complaint ; for, perfectly ignorant of the advantages of liberty, they desire it not ; are quite contented to be considered as much their master's property as his ox or his ass, provided they be foddered and fed as well.

The houses of the nobility are filled with these vassals, or servants, both male and female, who line the halls, passages, and entrances of the rooms in splendid liveries. In almost every anti-chamber some of these domestics are placed, ready to obey the commands of their lord or his

guests; and continually your ears are saluted with the theatrical call of "who waits?" when two or three run in at the instant, as promptly as I ever saw the gentlemen-in-waiting answer the like summons from the boards of Drury-Lane or Covent-Garden. What with the dwarf pages, fools, numerous attendants, and customs of hospitality practised here, I cannot but be struck with its resemblance to the establishments of our old English Barons; and sometimes almost fancy myself transported back to the feudal days of Britain. You, who are as romantic as myself in these particulars, can easily understand how these antiquated usages affect my imagination, and set it to work; and indeed I find it no unamusing train of thought to pursue the progress of different nations through various stages of civilization, till I can with ease point out the periods in each when their customs and manners have exactly paralleled. Thus the present manners of some countries are only correspondent with what were the manners of a neighbouring nation a century ago. And so I go on, when I have nothing else to do, making the world pass before me, as we whirl about its effigy on a globe, with our finger.

But to return to my slaves. Frequent instances have been mentioned to me of the cruelty with which some owners treat this unfortunate race. But I always found the anecdotes thus related were of very old date; and if not exaggerated, time has so altered the minds of the Russians, that such barbarities very seldom, if ever, now occur.

The boors are all slaves. Each estate has its native boors by hundreds, who perform all its agricultural duties. They are extremely

industrious; and when under a good owner, daily improve and become more valuable. Their attachment to their Lord, when well treated, is generally as warm, as their enmity on the reverse. Indeed, I was told the other day of a gentleman, who, possessed of a large village with its inhabitants, and wanting money, was going to sell it and them. His slaves, who loved him, hearing of this intended transfer of them to some new, and perhaps less amiable proprietor, went in a body to him, and offered to collect amongst themselves all the little savings their labours had amassed; and if the sum were inadequate to supply the deficiency, several volunteered to be sold, if he would but consent still to remain master of the village. Happy was this man's temporary poverty, since it shewed him his own worth, and proved to him the virtue of his slaves. From that day he must have considered them rather as his sons than as his vassals.

Uncultivated minds having nothing to restrain their passions, these ill-starred men are very vehement in their hatred; and sometimes, though seldom, they have no little provocation. When their owner exacts from them the produce of their earnings, after having perhaps received from them an exorbitant sum for allowing them to work at their respective trades, then, very frequently, they are wrought up to such resentment as to form formidable conspiracies against the life of their oppressor. One instance I can give you, which happened a few months ago. A gentleman having by some severities disobliged his slaves, they laid hold of him, and threw him into a large boiler of hot spirits in one of his own distilling houses. He was not discovered for some days; but when the murder was known, ten or fifteen of the perpetrators were *knouted* and banished for ever to Siberia. Before I

leave this subject, I must repeat another anecdote which is more singular than the former, and marks the simplicity of the one party, and the ingenious treachery of the other.

A German General, who had by his amiable qualities and military abilities risen to the highest rank in the Russian army, married a lovely woman of this country, by whom he became possessed of several estates and their appropriate slaves. He was a man of the best heart, being most susceptible of the sufferings of others, and eager to relieve them. On visiting one of these estates, he found a thousand impositions and acts of tyranny exercised on the poor boors, by six or seven farmers who rented great part of the property. His humanity was awakened; and, by degrees, he endeavoured to correct all these abuses, and gave orders to the junto of earth-holders to curtail their possessions, and to separate. As this sentence, if carried into effect, would have put an end to their avaricious plans, they saw no other chance of keeping their ground than by ridding themselves of their new master, which diabolical act they accomplished with the most ingenious cunning.

They found a boor who, with the savings from his daily toil, was anxious to buy a horse, thinking by that acquisition he would be enabled to extend his merchandize, and double his profits. The conspirators persuaded this unfortunate man to undertake the death of their enemy, and promised, in reward, twenty-eight rubles and the animal on which he had set his mind. Any scruples he might urge against the murder were over-ruled by the argument, that as the General was of a different religion from them, it was no greater sin than killing a dog. This decided him, and being counselled by his employers, that as soon

as he had effected their wishes, he was to conceal himself for some time (after which they engaged more largely to reward him), he prepared himself for the assassination.

On the morning of the first anniversary of the marriage day of the General and his bride, the happy pair having determined to celebrate it with a *fête*, ordered certain dispositions to be made in a neighbouring wood for that purpose. That all should be worthy the commemoration of an event which had been so felicitous to him, this amiable husband mounted his horse, and rode towards the thicket to inspect the arrangements for the entertainment. The peasant had secreted himself amongst the bushes: on the sight of his victim he levelled his too-well directed gun: the contents were lodged in the General's heart, and he sunk to the ground, murdered by one of the very wretches whose wrongs he had sought to redress. The terrified horse flew back to the house of his master: the blood on his coat, and the report of the gun, gave the alarm; and the fears of the unhappy lady were soon realized by the sight of men bearing in her husband's corpse. The perpetrator of the act was caught before he could escape: he confessed, and betrayed who were his accomplices. They were all seized, knouted, and sent to Siberia, and their houses burnt to the ground.

The lovely widow was inconsolable. She erected a mausoleum to her departed hero; and paying it diurnal and nocturnal visits, there wept over his murder and her grief, till the source of tears was dry. But time, that obliterator of most sorrows; and chance, whose never-failing fund of circumstances so often presents our weal or woe, threw in her way another soldier, amiable as brave, and in a fortunate hour she

saw her mourning weeds, by love's talisman changed into nuptial roses. She is now living and happy! So, dear friend, ends my dismal story. And that all dismal stories of which you and I, unluckily for ourselves, know so much, may terminate as comfortingly as the sorrows of this lady, is most devoutly wished by your faithful, &c. &c.

LETTER XXI.

Mosco, May, 1806.

I HAVE just returned from a delightful walk on the terrace of the Kremlin. In a former letter I spoke of the wide and magnificent prospect from the tower of the great church: this which I now enjoyed in strolling along the brow of the hill that fronts the palace, and which borders the river, commands a home view of most interesting particulars.

The granite quay stretches to a vast length at the base of the fortress: the Moskva, forested with vessels from the Volga, and other rivers of the interior: the foundling hospital, the various palaces of the nobility, as well as the gilding and many coloured domes of several hundred churches, extend themselves, till the horizon and its woods seem to unite the city with the sky. The fore-ground is formed of the religious buildings; and the ancient wall of the Kremlin, whose eastern battlements give a striking air of romantic grandeur to the whole. The large scale on which the *enfants trouvées* presents itself, fully conveys the nobleness of its plan, being, perhaps, the best endowed charity in Europe. A few months ago I wrote largely to you on the subject of this institution; or rather on one of its scions at St. Petersburg, which in every respect resembles its parent tree, excepting in the solidity of its foundation.

The hospital at St. Petersburg is almost entirely dependent on the

voluntary support of its august patroness ; but this at Mosco has other sources whence it draws the wealth that maintains it. One mean, amongst many others, of filling its treasury, arises from lending money upon property, the borrower paying a certain interest, rather more than five per cent. I should suppose ; as the hospital itself takes up money at that interest for the purpose of lending it again. The borrower giving security on his goods, or property of any sort, subjects himself to its seizure and sale by public auction, should he make any default in paying the interest on the appointed day. If the sum arising from the sale be less than sufficient to reimburse the hospital, the defalcation bears further interest till the debtor can pay it all off. But should the receipts be more than the debt, the overplus is given to the late owner of the goods. In the case of his absence, which often happens under these circumstances of misfortune, the hospital retains the money now as his debtor, crediting it with interest, and ready to refund, should the owner reclaim it within a certain day. If he do not, it then becomes for ever the property of the hospital. I have attended several of these auctions, and have seen pearls, diamonds, cambrics, and many other valuable articles, sold at the usual varied prices of those capricious meetings.

The hospital admitted one thousand infants last year ; one fourth of which number died ; a common average of its mortality, as the wretched parents seldom resign their offspring to this asylum until either sickness or want compels them.

But to return to the citadel. The walls and towers which encircle this spot, are further extended over that part of the city which is called the Tartar Town. The Emperor Paul caused many earthen works,

palisades, bastions, and ravelins, to be thrown up in front of that district ; but they are all of little consequence, and I verily believe that independent of a few pieces of ordnance of very large calibre, not a single garrison cannon is to be found in all the fortifications. Those belonging to the regiments in barracks are not considered as attached to the city.

The Kremlin has a daily guard of between five or six hundred men. I went with the Governor-general to see the parade, and found the troops to consist of a very fine body of men, recruits, but far from novices in their art. They are so well and rapidly disciplined by means of the cane, that the change from a clumsy blundering boor, to that of a neat active soldier, is generally as instantaneous as that from one of his native winters to all the beauties of spring. He is brought up from his *derrevna* or village, with his beard and hair in the trim of nature ; clad in sheep-skins, linden shoes, and walking with all the trudging awkwardness of unrestrained habit. A very short period changes his aspect entirely. His beard is sheared off, his hair bound into a regular *queue* ; and by way of making it grow in a more martial form, it is shaven from the forehead over the ears and half-way from the back part of the head. A regimental great-coat is put upon his person : he is booted, and set upright on his legs, at his peril not to lose his position. Thus then is he metamorphosed, and ere long has all the air of a soldier, completely getting rid of every relic of what he once had been. The custom of shaving the head answers two purposes ; to put their hair in training, and to prevent desertion, this mark making discovery so certain, that few, if any, ever dare run the risk. Their mode of drill differs little from ours, as we both copied from the same model, the Prussian discipline. They are heavier than our men in taking rapid positions ; but for steadiness and mechanical movements, none can exceed them.

Some little time ago the famous Princess Dashcoff did me the honour to have a few auxiliary regiments reviewed before me ; and I must acknowledge I never saw a more martial sight. Their picturesque uniforms, the dexterity of their evolutions, their war cries, and above all, the interest excited by the illustrious heroine who gave the word of command, produced sensations and thoughts truly gratifying. I found myself present with one of the most celebrated women in history, the friend of Catherine the Great ! I looked on her as one who had devoted her youth, that season of pleasure, to a patriotic zeal for her country. For this, her charms were concealed under a helmet, and her beautiful bosom braced in steel ; for this she encountered personal danger, obloquy, and dared every sacrifice that was in the power of a young and lovely and high-born female to make ! I contemplated her now time-marked figure with admiring wonder, and received with grateful veneration the attentions with which she honoured me. These are the characters, to see whom we would travel from land to land. They are the really great, the objects truly interesting, the subjects on which my pen delights to dwell. That I have known many of them, and been esteemed by some, is a distinction so ennobling, that I defy any man of common feeling to be capable of doing an unworthy action when he finds his honour guaranteed by the respect of those “ whom all men are proud to honour !”

The situation of Mosco is well worthy of such illustrious residents. It possesses many natural beauties. On the banks of the two fine rivers which encompass its circles, there are walks to suit all tastes, whether you wish to mingle with the gay crowd, or to steal alone into the romantic recesses of the woods

Like St. Petersburg, Mosco has its Summer-garden, the favourite resort of persons of all ranks. Its meandering water, undulating grounds, bridges, temples, and umbrageous avenues, render it a very charming recreation during the hot months. It originally belonged to a noble Scot, the friend and confidant of Peter the First: and in these sacred groves did that immortal Prince imbibe from his good, brave, and wise preceptor that greatness which hereafter entitled him to the admiration of the world. Besides the mansion once belonging to this friend of the Emperor, there is a palace also in the grounds, which is usually occupied by the imperial family whenever they take a summer excursion to their ancient metropolis. At one extremity of the principal walk stands the grand Military Hospital, instituted by Paul: being an elegant and extensive building overlooking the river, it is very well adapted to promote the health of its sick. The waters which flow at its feet, as well as the baths contiguous, are valuable acquisitions, both to the city at large and to the hospital. An English surgeon superintends the whole; and its regularity and neatness does ample honour to his care. It is the *depôt* for all the invalids sent from the numerous military stations and garrisons in the surrounding provinces. I understand that from two to three thousand are annually received, and that an average of one in thirty dies.

On my return through the walks of these beautiful gardens, I found them filled with crowds of pedestrians of every description, (twice a week it being a fixed *promenade*); those which most forcibly attract the notice of a stranger are the wives of the native merchants. They are dressed in all the riches their husbands can afford, in a fashion, hot, stiff, and most discordant with their figures. Their petticoat is of brocade



A Russian Trudoman's Wife in her Gala Dress



A Russian Tradesman's Wife in her Summer Dress

silk gaudily flowered, and slung on their shoulders by a kind of gallowses thick with embroidery. The body is covered with a jacket either of velvet or stuff, bound with gold lace and colours. A shift sleeve reaches to the elbow. Their neck and arms are bare, hung with beads, necklaces, ear and finger rings innumerable. Some wear diadems of gold set with coloured stones and pearls; others, a large square handkerchief richly shot with silver and various hues, and thrown down their backs, one corner being ingeniously wound round their heads, making a simple and pretty *coëffure*. On an elegant woman this habit might be becoming, but with the present wearers, it only makes deformity more hideous.

Every point about these dames is the opposite of beauty. Their eyes are tolerable, but totally divested of expression. Their complexions are besmeared with white and red paint, and their teeth most perversely stained with black, not a muscle of their face ever moves: and in general their usual attitude being stationary (hardly ever walking) with their hands knit together across their persons, they stand like a string of waxen figures, gazing on the passing groupings of the higher orders. From an extraordinary mode of tying their girdle they all look *as women wish to be who love their lords!* Married or single, it is just the same. You, who are so great an admirer of the exquisite symmetry of Greece and Rome, how would you start to meet a front view of one of these ladies! Relaxing stoves, warm baths, loose dresses, and negligent habits, with perhaps other causes into which I cannot penetrate, have so transformed one of the loveliest parts of the female person, that what in others is the very throne of beauty, with them is so monstrous, that I defy any but a Russian boor not to turn from them with the most loathing disgust. I have no doubt but that did we see them stripped

of their gilded jackets we should find that they equal the Hottentots in this burthened and most wondrously elongated feature in their shapes. However, I shall be better able to decide, as I am going this afternoon to see them bathe, which, I am told they do in public without either ceremony or shame. You shall have a faithful report, I pledge you my word.

I have made a sketch of their dressed appearance, by which you may judge how ill they suit what might be a very becoming apparel on a really pretty woman. On looking at their faces you easily discern the Tartar and Kalmuc ingraftation upon the old Moscovite stock. The visage is short, the bones of the cheeks high; the forehead projecting, and the eye small. Their stature is commonly of the middle size; and from their habits of life, both men and women are inclined to be more than abundantly fat. When a tinge of the Georgian Poles and Circassians mingles with the Russian blood, the result is the most exquisite beauty. But this is generally confined to the higher ranks; and, as I said before, there are such perfect specimens of female loveliness amongst the nobility at Mosco, there were I a Praxiteles, I need go no further to form my Venus.

It is now midnight! According to my promise, before I sleep I shall give you a description of the baths of Mosco; and as they are not at all like those of Diana, you need not fear any share of Actæon's fate for daring to peep at the robeless goddesses.

Having dined at the house of Count P—— in the neighbourhood of the scene, after dinner I took my course, accompanied by a friend as curious as myself, along the banks of the river which flows through the

Summer-garden. The spirit of investigation led us to the foot of the hospital, where we found a couple of baths for the reception of the bathers. These purifying reservoirs being the hot-baths, consisted of low wooden buildings with small openings in their sides, whence issued a thick muddy stream, flowing from the first washings of the natives, and in which they still laved their grease-incrusted bodies as they sallied forth to enjoy the cooling waves of the river. As we approached these cleansing elevations, we beheld the waters that rolled from under their foundations filled with naked persons of both sexes, who waded or swam out from the bath in great numbers, without any consideration of delicacy or decency. From motives of gallantry we posted ourselves opposite the ladies, the better to observe the *grace* and *nymph-like beauty* of their grottoes. To say that they did not blush, would be to belie them; for certainly their skins were of the brightest pink: but it was a spontaneous glow; not the sensitive flush of shame; for they look around with all the *sang-froid* of females fully apparelled. And in this Eve-ish state, with a wooden pail in one hand, and a huge bunch of umbrageous birch twigs in the other, they descended the steps into the river. This vernal collection was a very convenient substitute for the fig-leaves of Paradise; but that ancient and primitive use was not the only one to which it was appropriated. Being of the size and shape of a broom, it was intended for the more coercive exercise of creating, while in the warm vapour, a rapid perspiration from the pores, by a sort of Sancho-like flagellation on the hide of the fair or foul bather. As soon as any of these nymphs lost sight of her lower extremities in the stream, she instantly applied herself with no small degree of vigour to pour cold water on the top of her head, by the help of the wooden utensil she had carried with her into the river; the refreshing and bracing torrents thus streaming over her snoaking person, soon brought it

to a more delicate tint than the boiling hue with which she had issued from the stream.

Picture to yourself nearly a hundred naked naiads, flapping, splashing, and sporting in the wave with all the grace of a shoal of porpoises ! No idea of exposure ever crossed their minds, no thought of shame ever flushed their cheeks ; but floundering about they enjoyed themselves with as much indifference as when standing in all their trim array staring at the gay groupes in the Summer-garden. Even on the confines of their bath, nay, in the very midst of it, lusty boors were seen filling their casks for the use of the city. So many masses of granite would have been regarded with equal attention by either party. With the women bathed many men ; all mingled together, just as they do in the hot springs at Bath, where both sexes boil in one cistern, looking more like sodden beef-steaks than human beings. Bad as they are in Bladud's pool, they are ten thousand times more hideous in that of the Summer-garden : for the men are almost all bearded, or grinning grimly through horrible whiskers and fierce mustachios. The bathers are of every age, form, and size ; Don Quixotes, Sanchos, Sampsons, &c. as well as of all the misshapen figures that ever came from the hand of nature, or suffered the ill effects of mains, bandy, or other foes to the beauty of man. And as to the gentler sex, I can witness they were more like the real than the fancied Dulcinea ; more like the buxom Maritomes, than either the agile Diana, or the beauteous Susannah, who charmed the elders of Israel to folly.

My allusion to the Hottentots was not ill-conceived ; for in my life I never beheld any thing so disgusting. Women of twenty years old, with a pretty symmetrized face, possessed a bosom which a painter

would have given to the haggard attendants of Hecate. I will not proceed farther in my observations on this delicate part of creation ; but lament that custom, fashion, and mistaken habits, have so much power to spoil what was originally the most lovely work of nature.

Amidst this superabundant groupe, in which the female form had indeed run to weeds, we descried a few young virgins (whose twisted hair declared them to have pretensions to that title) ; and their slender and serpentine figures gave us some hint that the female *form divine* was not quite obliterated from their race. Whatever admiration was called forth during this scene, fell to their share ; though that they did appear fair, arose rather from comparison with their Hottentot companions, than from any real beauty in themselves.

I know not how to account for the extraordinary and quiet exposure which these ladies make of their persons ; except we derive it from the old explanation *use* : and that, we find able to reconcile the most preposterous practices to our minds. That the indelicacy does not penetrate to their morals, is seen in their conduct. She who would not take the smallest trouble to hide any part of her person from the observer's eye, would, a few minutes afterwards, when she was dressed, resent to the highest pitch of indignation any liberty taken with her charms.

An ukase issued at St. Petersburg forbids the sexes using, in that capital, the same baths : but, as the interdict did not extend to Mosco, here I had the pleasure of seeing so extraordinary an exhibition. And, indeed, had I not witnessed the scene, I could hardly have believed the possibility of their being in existence such objects as I then beheld.

The Russian women swim like geese; they bathe every Saturday, and on the eve of every holiday.

Sleep being reluctant to displace from my eyes the images of these water-nymphs, I am too wide awake to go to bed; and having kept you so long in the company of one set of *belles*, I shall introduce you to another of a somewhat different appearance. I mean those that adorn the churches; not the *belles* of the cloister, but the bells of the steeple. Every religious building is provided with eight or nine at least. But the most celebrated in all Mosco are those of St. Ivan in the Kremlin, whose size and weight are equal to the *biggest tom* that ever a bell-foundry produced. There is one, now deeply sunk in the ground, of an enormous bulk. Mr. R—— gave me the following estimate of its dimensions. Its weight is 432,000 pounds; its circumference at the base, twenty yards; and the thickness of its metal twenty-three inches, or perhaps two feet. Its height, to the place where the clapper is suspended, is nineteen feet. The tongue lies not far from the spot in which this mass of metal is sunk: it is of iron, and seventeen feet in length. The bell is encircled with many rims of embossed work; and was intended, when finished, to be a present from the Empress Ann to the great church. I am told that it was never elevated from this spot, in which it was cast, but in cooling cracked, and so became useless. Others say, that it was raised to a very great height, but that the beam to which it was suspended taking fire, it again fell into its original bed, and sustained the present fracture in its fall. The chasm made in its side by the accident, is about the size of an ordinary door; into which the curious may enter if they have any wish to penetrate into this huge pyramid of metal. The bell cannot be seen but by a special order; the place being boarded over, you make your entrance through a trap-

door. This mutilated work has a sister of a greater size in China, which, I understand, is the largest in the known world.

Having now given you a peal, or rather cheated you of one, as I have introduced you to none but silent bells, I will bid you good night, well aware that you have had lullaby enough in this letter. To-morrow I will speak to you further of the churches.

* * * * *

May 8th. O. S. Noon.

I have not time to resume my subject; but before I close my letter I must inform you of an event that I have just been told: the widow of the great Suwarroff died this day at eleven o'clock! She was of the illustrious Prosorowski family; and bore to her renowned husband two children; Natolia who married Count Nicolas Zouboff; and Arcadius, a brave young man, emulous of his father's glory.

So pass away the great and the interesting of this earth! While the widow, or the children of a venerated character remain, we do not seem to have lost all of the person we lament: they are living monuments to his memory. His image revives whenever we look on objects that were so dear to him, and which, in a manner, once formed a part of himself. But when they are gone; when the race soon follows its founder to the grave, time rapidly draws its dimming flood over the past; and seeing the hero's actions as in a darkened mirror, remembrance involves him with the cloud of departed greatness; and making one with the groupe of Thermopylæ, Cressy and Blenheim, he loses that pre-eminence in our regrets which the memorials of his person, while living, ever re-

newed. Thus have many of our own brave men, within a few years, passed into the world of spirits; and are now named by Britons with as much indifference as they would speak of Talbot, of Hotspur, or of any other of our departed worthies.

The observation you yourself made on seeing Mr. West's design of the death of Lord Nelson, not a little influenced me in these reflections. You tell me that "the picture of the death of General Wolf stood by that of Nelson. Hardly a single person looked on the first; all eyes were turned to the last: not a tear was spared for the gallant Wolf; not a sigh; not a word of encomium on his merits; not a regret for his untimely fall! I thought it strangely unthinking: for the very sensibility I felt on looking at Nelson, turned my eyes to Wolf, and divided my sorrow."

It is true, my friend; you felt so because you always think when you feel. But the feelings of many are merely the effect of infection; or are awakened by a narrow concern for themselves at being deprived of some recent good. Thoughtless of others, they acknowledge no benefactors but their own; and never having experienced in their own persons the protection which arose from the courage of some hero slain a few years before their time, they have no sympathies to excite concern for his loss; they have no generous regrets for the noble creature himself; for his being cut off in the meridian of life and of honours; for the tender relations who mourned his fall; nor for the country at large which was thus rifled of one of its best defenders.

The death and triumph of a hero are equally short-lived in the hearts of any but his personal friends. Sorrow for the one is obliterated by some

more recent loss ; and pride in the other superseded by the victories of some brother in fame. Few, like you, can give an equal homage to the great and good of all times. But it is a delightful sensibility, for in proportion as you feel their virtues, you enjoy them ; they become endeared to you ; and thus you make to yourself a second kind of existence ; a sort of mental intimacy and relationship with the noblest beings of every age. In this friendship may you ever associate the idea of your faithful friend.

LETTER XXII.

Mosco, May, 1801

AMONGST the illustrious residents in Mosco from whom I have received the most gratifying attentions, is the Prince U—— I have lately had the honour of being his visitor at a fine mansion which he recently purchased near the Sparrow-hill, a beautiful spot three miles from the city. This palace was built by Prince Dolgorouky as a country seat; and if it does not show the skill of the architect, its situation at least bears witness to the taste of the Prince.

It stands on a very high ground richly wooded; at the base of which flows the Moskva in Thames-like meanders through a luxuriant plain, varied with innumerable gardens and superb structures. On the right, terminating the view of the river, rises Mosco in all its ancient Asiatic pomp. Its myriads of glittering minarets and lofty palaces, as well as the pale citadel, form an object of transcendent grandeur; and then as a back-ground, the black and distant woods skirting the horizon, give an effect to the splendor of the city which can hardly be described. I have attempted a sketch, which will give you some idea of its outline; but without the aid of colours it is impossible to depict the burnished glow of the whole, when opposed to this forest, like an evening sky of fluid gold, shining through the breaks of a thunder-cloud.

On pursuing the prospect towards the left, the antiquated walls of the



Divitchy convent is no less striking. The many turrets which form a security to the holy dwellings within; the long extent of the battlements; the high and slender spires, and golden domes of the chapels; and the crescents and sacred crosses rising amid the trees, marking the situation of the Andrefsky monastery; produce, altogether, a very interesting scene.

The monastery is a perfect specimen of the old architecture. Its style and ornaments resemble the Hindoo temples. I was struck with the likeness the moment I observed the building. During my visit to the Prince, I crossed the water to take a nearer view of the Divitchy. Its form is quadrangular; the walls extremely high and embattled in the eastern fashion, with many square towers at short distances. Its gates are strongly defended; and in days of old, a garrison always did duty here. It contains several churches, and the houses for the *religieuses*, which are spacious and convenient; besides places dedicated to the use of those whom accident or necessity may have forced to take shelter within the monastery.

One of the nuns was so kind as to attend me through the aisles of the great church, particularly to shew me the tomb of Princess Sophia, the ambitious sister of Peter the First. The outside of the edifice is of the Asiatic architecture, with gilded domes and minarets. The walls and gates are curiously painted with holy personages and miracles: but unfortunately the interior was repairing, so I was disappointed of seeing it to its usual advantage. The finest object within, was a high and rich screen overlaid with gold, interspersed with the emblazoned histories of Saints and Virgins. On entering the grand portico to the right, a tomb

of a very simple shape was pointed out to me as the burying-place of the Princess Sophia. It is constructed of a large stone raised a little above the pavement, and upon it is a kind of sarcophagus, flat at the sides and tapering towards the top, like the roof of a house: it is very small, is whitened over, and generally is covered with a black pall. At the head is this inscription.

A. M. 7412.; C. x. 1704.

On the 3d of July, O. S. died Sophia Alexovna,

Aged 46 years, 9 months and 6 days.

Her religious name was Susannah;

She was a Nun for 5 years, 8 months and 12 days;

And was buried on the 4th of July,

In this Holy Church of Smolinsko.

&c. &c. &c.

So low lies that Princess, whose ambition held this empire in commotion for sixteen years! Here, shut out from all eyes, lies that exquisite beauty with which she enslaved the wise Gallitzin, and beguiled the unfortunate Strelitzes to their ruin. It was an awful moment thus to stand over the tomb of a woman, who, by her actions, seemed to think that she of all creation was alone exempt from the penalty of death. To reign was her wish; and to that end she sacrificed every law of nature: thousands were slain in the contest between her party and that of Peter; by false accusations she compassed the murder of sixty loyal nobles: she plotted the death of her half-brother Peter, and finding its accomplishment impracticable, to exclude him entirely from the throne, forced her own brother the idiot Ivan and declared Tzar, to marry her. What a sea of blood seemed to encompass her grave! I shuddered

when I looked at the end of all this guilt — a stone bed of six feet square ! Forty-six years terminated this career of ambition, murder and incest ! and all for what ? — a throne !

Surely there is magic in that word. For, it is to the word alone, usurpers immolate all that is valuable in the kingly dignity ; the power of dispensing good and of enjoying happiness ! What a bastard sort of power is that which, built upon destruction, commands a few sordid wretches, who, perhaps, only await a favourable moment to free themselves of their tyrant ! It is the power of a Turk over the slaves of his seraglio ; not the generous sway of a good monarch over the hearts of a vast empire. And then for happiness ; the meed which every human creature seeks as the reward of his labours ; how can it exist in the bosom of the traitor, the murderer, and the fratricide ? All then was sacrificed by this unhappy woman to a shadow ? to a shadow that vanished the moment she thought it within her grasp, and left her to a grave of guilt, and dreadful impending judgment !

The convent in which she terminated her life, contains about one hundred and fifty females ; seventy-five only of whom have yet taken the veil. An appendage which, by the bye, they never wear ; but as a mark of their vow have their heads shaved. This they do at the age of fifty, the time when they are allowed to make their holy profession : Until that period they remain novices, and may marry if they please. To facilitate opportunities of preferring the matrimonial to the monastic vows, they have perfect liberty ; the gates of the monastery being open all day, and permission granted them to go out and receive visitors without restraint. They have each a separate apartment and every reasonable comfort. The abbess is chosen from amongst the widows of the

Russ merchants, and provided she be of an unexceptionable character, may be elected without having been previously attached to any religious institution. In short, there is no law belonging to the Russian convents that does not demonstrate the rationality which dictated their establishment. As these ordinances are rather curious, I think you will not find a copy of them uninteresting, I shall give them to you as they relate both to monks and nuns.

1. No person to be received as a monk who is under the age of thirty.

2. No military person to be admitted as a monk.

3. No slave to be admitted as a monk without being emancipated by his master, or bearing an express order from the sovereign or synod. He must be able to read and write.

4. No married man who has a wife living, to be admitted as a monk, especially if in parting he gave her a licence to marry again. If a husband and wife are both desirous to embrace the monastic profession, their cases must be maturely considered before permission be granted them: namely, whether they are of the lawful age, whether they have children or not, and if they have, in what situation they leave them.

5. No one having any civil employment, or who runs away for debt, or to escape punishment for any offence, to be admitted as a monk.

6. No one charged with a particular commission, unless he has dismissory letters, to be admitted as a monk.

7. No person to be admitted as a monk for money, unless he promises never to boast of it, and makes a formal renunciation of any claim to privileges beyond his brethren.

8. Nor shall any person, against whom there is no objection, be immediately admitted to the tonsure upon his entrance into the convent; but remain three years under the inspection of an approved monk; during which time the superior shall enjoin him various services to prove his obedience. After this novitiate of three years, it is necessary to have the permission of the bishop of the diocese before he takes the habit; which permission the bishop is not to grant without the superior and monks of the convent present a certificate of the novice's efficiency. Should the novice, after the term of three years, change his mind, he shall be at liberty to depart from the monastery, and no one has a right to reproach him on that account: but should he afterwards desire to return, he must serve his novitiate over again.

9. Novices, during their novitiate, and especially near the time of their reception, shall diligently read the monastic vows, in order to examine whether they have resolution to undertake them.

10. All monks are to confess and receive the communion four times in the year.

11. They are to avoid idleness; employing themselves in reading, painting, &c.

12. They are not allowed servants, at least none but the superior, and the aged and infirm.

13. An hospital and proper persons to attend the sick and aged, to be provided in every convent.

14. Monks are not to invite guests without permission of the superior.

15. No monk may pay visits without permission ; and then he must be accompanied by another monk. They must not visit in secular houses, but upon solid and lawful reasons.

16. They are to eat and drink in common in the refectory ; no one is permitted to carry any thing to his own cell.

17. Neither money nor goods of other persons to be kept in a monastery ; whatever is so found shall be forfeited to the monastery.

18. Neither the superior nor monks shall admit women into their cells. They are to be received in the parlour where strangers are admitted ; and in every case there must be more than one monk present.

19. The monks shall strictly study the Bible. The most learned amongst them shall explain it ; and such only shall be promoted to ecclesiastical dignities.

OF NUNNERIES.

1. Nuns shall never, on any pretext whatever, go out of their convent. Not even from motives of devotion, or to assist at processions or the feasts of churches. In monasteries where the church is not conti-

guous, secret and covered ways are to be made from the convent to the church, for the nuns to pass through.

2. No nun shall receive the tonsure before she is fifty years old. If a young woman declares an inclination to become a nun, the circumstances of her resolution shall be strictly examined; and then she may be allowed to reside in the convent, being always under the inspection of an aged and discreet nun until she has attained the prescribed age: she may then take the vows. But should she in the mean time change her mind, and be inclined to marry, she is at full liberty.

3. Nuns must not pass their time in idleness; but must always be employed in some work, as spinning, sewing, making lace, &c. For which purpose proper teachers shall be provided to each monastery.

RULES FOR THE ARCHIMANDRITES, OR SUPERIORS.

1. The heads of monasteries shall be chosen from those monks whose manners are irreproachable, and who are distinguished by their knowledge of the duties of the monastic life. Besides which, they must be intimately conversant with the Scriptures, and with the rules of their order, and labour, not only for their own salvation, but for that of their brethren.

2. They shall admonish those who desire to be admitted against the will of their relations; as husbands who forsake their wives, wives who forsake their husbands; parents, who by imprudent vows would sacrifice their children to a monastic life; reminding them such resolutions are displeasing to God, and contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

We are struck at once with the excellence of these regulations, when compared with those which relate to monasteries in the Latin church ; and cannot but particularly approve of the care with which the superstition of celibacy is guarded against in the young and inexperienced. To the immortal Tzar Peter are they indebted for this liberal code.

The dress of the nuns of the Divitchy is a black habit with wide sleeves ; the whole lined with reddish brown. A black velvet cap fitting close to their shaven heads, coming down over the ears, and under the chin in a sort of bandage. The novices have a cap pointed at the top. Their hair is plaited, and hangs down behind an immense length : it is fastened in the pole of the neck by a piece of brown taffeta which shades half the *queue* as a sort of curtain. Their robe is of black cloth with tight sleeves, and has also a cape. The fashion of the hair marks the unsworn vestal state, as the vowed nuns are deprived of theirs.

My tonsured conductress shewed me several cases of holy relics. They consisted of bones, wood, teeth, and pieces of wearing apparel, curiously preserved and highly venerated. She also led me into the apartments which had been inhabited by the Princess Sophia. I entered the cell wherein her haughty mind so often brooded in disappointment over her fallen greatness ; I looked through the very windows from which she had beheld the execution of numbers of her party, and particularly of three of her most intimate confederates, who were hanged on gibbets within a few yards of the convent wall. Peter ordered this horrible scene to be performed before her own eyes, as a small punishment for the ambition which had conspired against his life, and drawn his subjects into rebellion.

These gloomy rooms have lately been newly filled up ; but much of their old furniture remains ; particularly the religious pictures which adorned the walls in her time ; and other holy articles necessary to a nun's cell. Having gone through the whole of the church, I took my leave of my saintly conductress, thanking her most sincerely for the trouble she had taken in walking so long, and for the patience with which she answered my numerous questions.

Soon after I left the vicinity of the Divitchy, I was invited by Prince W—— to go down to his country residence on the day of the Holy Trinity. It being the *fête de village* of the Prince, I expected much rustic festivity ; for general entertainment, I could be at no loss, as my illustrious host is not only master of all the graces of hospitality, but eminent for learning and talents. His palace is finely situated, and built of stone with great taste and splendor ; possessing every accommodation for the gayest amusements and the profoundest study.

When I arrived, the whole family, visitors and vassals, were assembled in the church ; and when I joined the party, were arranged in a circle before the holy screen. The pavement was strewn with flowers and green herbs, each person holding in his hand a bouquet. One was also presented to me on my entrance. All the peasantry were dressed in their best, and decorated with this vernal ornament. Three priests officiated, the superior of them being a man of a most venerable aspect. Many prayers were read and anthems sung ; after which a sermon was delivered with great judgment and feeling : at least so it seemed to me, from the energy of the preacher and the rivetted attention of the congregation. Towards the conclusion the whole party, as well as the two assistant ecclesiastics knelt down, holding the flowers up to their faces.

I could not learn any satisfactory explanation of the religious use of these nosegays ; some telling me they were brought as the first offerings of spring ; others, that they were meant to wipe away the tears which they shed during the service. I fancy that this practice, like that of giving eggs at Easter, is now known by the custom only, the origin being entirely lost in the lapse of time.

The ceremony finished by the congregation kissing the cross, and receiving the benediction and holy water.

The sacred duties of the day over, the villagers prepared to adjourn to their vernal sports ; but alas, both I and they were disappointed in this ! It rained heavily, and continued so unremittingly, that this part of the entertainment was obliged to be given up, and the peasantry, after giving a few blank looks to the watery heavens, feasted plentifully within doors. Well charged with brandy, and covered with gay ribbons, at an early hour, they very joyously and contentedly returned home.

A splendid dinner, and a most delightful ball, closed the day in the hospitable halls of the Prince. Amongst the guests I met with a gentleman of extraordinary mental acquirements. His name was so difficult of pronunciation that I cannot recollect it ; but, in our conversation, he gave me a little account of the origin of M^osco, which I have remembered rather more correctly.

It was founded by the son of Vladimir, on some confiscated lands originally belonging to an imperious nobleman who had offended this prince. They consisted of morasses intersected with branches, or

stream-like ditches from the rivers Moskva and the Neglia; near the conflux of which rose a hill, commanding the surrounding country, and well protected by the encircling marshes. It was richly covered with trees; and its environs of plain and forest rendered the situation doubly romantic. The young Prince saw and became enamoured of the spot, and immediately ordered a mansion to be built there; in which he afterwards passed the greatest part of his time. Few advances towards its becoming a city, took place during his life. But undoubtedly to this palace is Moscow indebted for its capital. It was a point of attraction around which houses and streets gradually assembled until they spread themselves to a large town.

Daniel, the son of the sainted Alexander Nefsky, was also enraptured with the situation; and not only increased his predecessor's buildings, but added, for its security, palisadoes and a deep ditch. Thus did it continue, growing by degrees within its own boundary, till the succession of Dimitri Ivanovitch Donskoy, who employed an Italian architect to erect a strong and well-defended wall. This was accomplished towards the close of the fifteenth century. The same Prince embellished the city with several new and noble churches.

Mosco has often felt the miseries of war. In the year 1384, Tamerlane stormed the place, and held it for some time. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Tartars again overran the greater part of Russia; and the old capital with the rest. But Ivan Vassilovitch drove them thence: and to him much of its succeeding splendor and consequence may be attributed. From this period it became the residence of the Tzars. I fancy few empires have had the seat of government so frequently changed as Russia; for few empires were ever so extensive.

From its magnitude it comprised many independent principalities ; each of which, according to the ambition or genius of their respective sovereigns, at different times held all the others in subjection. Thus Kief, Valdimir, Twer, Novgorod, Mosco, and St. Petersburg, may all boast of having governed the country. The whole extent of this vast empire being now firmly fixed under the sceptre of the Romanoff family ; and as it aspires to naval consequence, St. Petersburg is likely to remain for ever the capital of Russia ; unless some political earthquake shake the north with as dire a fury as it has done the south. And, to avert which from our old ally, every honest Englishman will unite his prayers with those of, your faithful friend.

LETTER XXIII.

Mosco, June, 1806.

IT being a most sultry day, the prominent object of my present feelings (I will not dignify bodily perceptions by the name of thoughts) is the weather. And, as I write to you as I would speak, you must take the subjects, dull or entertaining, just as they rise. The weather, then, being a very interesting investigation to us English, I shall indulge you with a few observations on the climate of Russia. Having passed both a winter and a summer under its skies, I consider myself tolerably learned on my proposed theme.

St. Petersburg is in lat. 59° 56' N. Although surrounded by flat and marshy lands, that city is by no means unhealthy. The air is uncontaminated by pestilential vapours, as care is taken to drain the swamps; which otherwise, with the Augean additions from the *cleanliness* of the lower inhabitants, might prove dreadfully noxious. The police manages all this with admirable diligence; and maugre the natural love which the *canaille* seem to have to wallow in an uncleansed sty, I never saw a race more healthy than the common people are in Russia; and were it not for their excessive use of brandy, I believe the rigour of the climate, and their constant exercise, would prolong their days to an almost patriarchal date.

The higher orders, from indulgence, luxurious living, little exercise

and hot stoves, are very susceptible of colds: indigestions, unwieldiness, and shortened lives, are the natural consequence. This is the case with most; but many, who are aware of the ill effects of such customs, discard them; and are as active and hale as the stoutest of our countrymen.

Hence you will observe, that a climate is not to be judged by the general appearance of the people of fortune residing under its influence; habits of their own counteract its effects. It is from the peasantry we must draw our judgment: and I will venture to say, that in no country I ever saw more robust men than I met with in the natives of Russia.

There are only five degrees between Mosco and St. Petersburg. The climate of the old capital is even more salubrious than the new. Being situated on high grounds, it has a great advantage. Two fine rivers run through its centre. The streets are all so spacious that no foul air can stagnate in any one of them. The atmosphere is generally clear, and the weather settled. In summer, though it is hot, there are no noxious vapours to render it dangerous; and in winter the air is so pure, so bright and exhilarating, that you seem to inhale the very elixir of life into your lungs. It is impossible to describe the animating feelings which these ethereal breathings excite in the breast; and as the bath of ether, through which we move, embraces every part, it seems to brace each nerve, and fill us with a spring of life enchanting and exhaustless.

In the following table I give you the length of the days at the summer and winter solstice. For instance, when in winter the day is the shortest, the sun rises and sets according to this calculation; differing only in the summer, by the day being of the greatest length when this order is reversed.

	Sun rises.		Sun sets.	
	Hours.	Minutes.	Hours.	Minutes
At Archangel -	10	24	1	36
St. Petersburg	9	15	2	45
Tobolsk - -	8	56	3	4
Riga - -	8	47	3	19
Mosco - -	8	37	3	23
Kief - - -	8	7	3	53
Astracan -	7	48	4	12

By this also may be seen the degrees of heat and cold, according to Rhamur, and Farenheit.

To me the northern winter is far preferable to its summer. I mean at Mosco or St. Petersburg, the (to Russians) milder regions, though with you, they would be deemed so penetrating, that were it not for furs, and the exercise the rigour of the climate compels us to take, we English might, if as thinly clad as the warmest of ye all in Britain, stand a good chance of becoming stationary, like poor Mrs. Lot, not a pillar of salt, but a huge erect icicle.

If the cold be then so intense in the degree of Mosco, what must it be in the latitude of Archangel! The inconveniences of so rigorous a climate, the want of society, and having many days when the sun is scarcely seen, rising at ten o'clock and setting at one; with the addition of being so far from all knowledge of what is passing in the rest of the world, must make a rational creature find such a life a very sorry pilgrimage, or rather an *anchoritism*, worse than that amid the arid deserts of Egypt. Yet to these apparently accursed spots, we find interest lead

men, as merchants, to pass many a year of their lives, shut out from every comfort of existence. Strange infatuation of man, to waste his days in providing for a period which he never sees! From youth to age he suffers every privation that inclement elements, cheerless labours, and joyless society can inflict, to amass a hoard of wealth, useless to him there: yet there he lives, gathering more and more, daily intending to return home to his native country and enjoy his riches; and yet putting it off for another bag of gold, till death surprises him. Then on his cold bed, he finds that he has suffered and toiled in vain: a kindred, who had perhaps forgotten all of him but his name, were to reap the reward of his labours, while he filled a dismal grave beneath the frozen pole!

This terrible country, which seems as if it really lay under an interdict from Heaven, is formed of sterile rocks, morasses, and naked mountains. Rarely a living soul is seen to animate the dreary solitude; not an ear of corn ever ripens there; and the utmost of their harvest is a little poor barley: not a fruit tree of any sort ever cheers the eye; all is one wide waste of desolation. It is in these iron regions that we hear of travellers, nay whole families, being frozen to death. Water freezes as it falls; and birds drop from the heavens hard as marble. Often groupes of men and horses have been discovered on the high roads, in various attitudes, dead, and stiff, and petrified to ice. Instances have been known of boors being brought by their horses into villages and towns, lifeless, sitting upright with every appearance of existence, holding their whip and reins. This happens even between Mosco and St. Petersburg, when the winters are particularly severe.

It is a very common thing for the nose, ears, or any other extremity exposed to the air, to be frost-bitten, which effect takes place unfelt by

the sufferer himself; and if some friendly person is not passing by early in the operation to give notice of its seizure, the consequence is inevitable. If on the instant the part congealed be not well rubbed with snow, to recal circulation, the result is obvious; a few moments place the afflicted in a most *mortifying* situation, and a few hours deprive him of ears, fingers, or nose; a circumstance not enviable, although he has the consolation that he runs no risk of its ever happening again.

Having brought you to Archangel, though rather mysteriously, as I never was there myself! I shall give you a little insight into the interesting particulars of the place. I gained them from a merchant of great respectability, who had often visited that corner of the empire; so you may be satisfied of seeing as truly through his eyes as through mine.

Archangel is the capital of a province of the same name. It is so called from a monastery dedicated to the Archangel Michael, which is near the principal town. You may judge how cold the province is from its being bounded on the north by the Frozen Ocean. Amid these terrible rocks of ice, Sir Hugh Willoughby, the famous commander of our Queen Elizabeth, in seeking a north-east passage to China, was imprisoned with his whole fleet and perished. Chancellor, who commanded a small squadron under him, chanced to be driven by stress of weather into a bay near the mouth of the Dwina; there he landed: and so became the first Briton that ever was known to set foot on the Russian shore. This very haven that gave him shelter, was that of Archangel: and soon after his arrival, such communications were made to the Tzar Ivan Vassilovitch II. that a trade was commenced between the two countries.

The principal articles of export were then potash, caviar, tallow, wax, hides, hemp, feathers, tar, yarn, beef, rhubarb, Chinese and Persian silks, cork, bacon, cordage, furs, &c. a curious assemblage! The commerce rapidly increased; and Archangel continued the sole port of any consequence in Russia, till the building of St. Petersburg removed the principal trade to the havens of the Baltic.

The town of Archangel is comprised in one long street of wooden houses. It has a court of admiralty, dock-yard, and a fine monastery, which is the residence of its bishop. Extensive forests, the timber of which is a great article of traffic, grow in this government, and in that of Olonetz, its near neighbour. The exportation of larch being expressly prohibited, deal and masts of fir are the only timber the merchants can send to sea. Very few of our nation are now there; the founding of St. Petersburg drawing from those inclement regions all those whose fortunes were not as barren as the soil. So much for Archangel! which, if I were to consult my own feelings, I would rather denominate Arch-devil! And considering the poet's description of the frozen as well as the burning hell, I do not think that I should name the borders of the polar sea amiss.

I shall now thaw your congealed veins, and bring you back to the vernal months of summer. During this season, Mosco, like most other great cities, loses most of its gay inhabitants. As soon as the sultry weather sets in, they take their flight to their respective country seats. From this cause the population varies almost incalculably in the two seasons of winter and summer; as each of the noble families seldom departs or arrives without sixty or seventy persons in its suite, besides

two or three hundred slaves. This exit and entrance make an alteration of nearly 50,000 souls. The multitude who people this metropolis in the colder months amounting to 359,000, and in the warmer to 300,000. This does not include the villages close to the city, as they contain souls to the number of 60,000, or more.

I have already mentioned to you some of the most delightful country residences of the nobility around Mosco: a few others I shall here notice, in which I have enjoyed some of the pleasantest moments of my northern travels. One in particular, Ostanknia, a mansion of Count Tcheremetoff is magnificent in its structure, and most romantically situated. It is furnished in the finest taste, and possesses many valuable antiques; amongst the most excellent is a statue, named on the pedestal *the goddess of health*. Its drapery is exquisite, and the form of the figure of the first Grecian mould. The feet and one hand are modern, and the head seems to have been also restored; but the rest is in good preservation, and fully declare it to have been the work of the classic ages. The Count gave 1200 rubles for it. Indeed all that belongs to this nobleman is of the best in taste and costliness. Besides Ostanknia he has other fine residences, but the most admired is that of Kuscova, about seven versts from Mosco. The buildings and gardens are in a princely style, having a superb theatre, banqueting house, and hermitage. The noble owner frequently gives entertainments here, every way harmonizing with his own fine taste, and the elegance of his habitation. Cards, and all sorts of games of chance, are in great request. "Surely, (you will cry) this is no very happy instance of the *tasteful* entertainments of Kuscova!" True; though it may be of their fashion. The nobility, in general, are so enamoured of what they term the fascinating suspense of these amusements, that the want of them would

be worse than a penance. However, as suspense of any kind is purgatory to me, I have not yet learnt their art; and as you hold the whole in contempt from spade-ace down to a te-totum, I will make my bow to the card-table, and turn to more congenial subjects.

However, you will perceive by all that I have formerly said, that the Russians are also particularly fond of pleasures out of doors. Their cavalcades, promenades, and *fêtes champêtres*, in the summer; and their sledging parties in the winter, are not a little friendly to hilarity and health. A thousand gay excuses are formed to take them into the air; and so, for once, fashion is favourable to the wholesome. For instance, I went the other afternoon to a spectacle where all the beauty and rank of Mosco were assembled. It was to see a Frenchman ascend in a balloon, (for there is hardly a nation in the known world whom their flights do not set agape!) here I had an opportunity of not only enjoying the fresh air, the sight of so many lovely women, but also of observing the excellence of that police I before spoke of: multitudes of people, and a crowd of carriages, not to be numbered, were on the spot. Not an altercation ensued; every vehicle moved on and off in rotation, remaining perhaps for the space of a minute until the soldiers of the police had ascertained whether its proprietor was ready to re-enter. If not, the next drove up, and so the rest in order. It is a military arrangement; and as such all its officers and soldiers are regimentally clothed. They are well mounted, and also well vested with authority; which I have frequently seen applied to the heads and backs of the boors and coachmen.

One amusement I must not omit noticing, which they call coursing. In my mind, when managed with even the most plausible address, it

can never be a humane pastime ; and as it is ordered here it is a cruel one. With us it has an apology in the health produced by its attendant exercise, and the delights of a pleasurable suspense. But here the recreation is so simplified, that it hardly seems to contain any thing but the murder of the animal. In England we have the social anxiety of beating an interesting and extensive country, and of following the game, when sprung, for several hours, in swift and jocund pursuit. The attention kept awake, the spirits exhilarated, and life imbibed in every coming gale, gives an intoxication to the senses which may very readily make the huntsmen forget the sufferings of the chace. But here all is the reverse.

A few days ago I was invited to be a spectator of one of these scenes : and obeying the summons, soon found myself on the extensive plain which extends along one side of the city. A concourse of people of all ranks was assembled, with about a hundred and twenty greyhounds in couples. These animals are formed with the nicest symmetry, and they are so strong and powerful in their hold, that nothing they once strike their teeth into ever escapes. Their coats are uncommonly beautiful, and the hair on their tails so redundant, that they are usually called fantailed greyhounds.

On the same spot where the grouse had met, were boxes placed at certain distances, each containing a hare which had been previously snared and cooped in this solitary habitation till the day of the sport. At an appointed moment the *amateur*, to whom the dogs belonged, and for whose entertainment this lively and humane pastime was prepared, gave the word ! when suddenly one of the little creatures was let loose from its prison ; and almost as soon, two of the hounds, were untied and

allowed to pursue it. The start the poor hare had was probably not more than three hundred yards; of course the chase was very brief. The terrified animal was soon overtaken, and after a few doubles the canine pair buried their teeth in the heart of the panting fugitive. About thirty of these miserable little creatures fell in this manner; each coursed by fresh dogs; and each destroyed almost immediately on being started.

The promoter of the diversion did not seem to enjoy it greatly, and as small a degree of animation appeared in the faces of the spectators. Indeed, from what I have seen of this amusement, as well as of Russian horse-racing, I must suppose that the habits of this country are inimical to the activity of blood which rushes through the veins of an English hunter, shooter, or racer. Our early education to exercise of all sorts gives a stimulus to mind and body that impels Englishmen to undertake every enterprise with intrepidity, and confirms him to pursue it with an undaunted resolution to overcome. The severity of the Russian winter is a sufficient excuse for the want I observe: an iron frost, with the threatened loss of toes or fingers, being a no very attractive season for the sportsman to take the field. The extreme heat of summer is equally a foe to the vigorous exercise which such amusements demand; and as for the temperate days of spring or autumn, they know them not. The heat sets in as rapidly as the cold disappears; and the summer months, though not many, are scorching to an intolerable degree. The peasant sows his corn with little labour, often without the trouble of a plough, and reaps his harvest in less than three months.

During the summer the very plagues of Egypt are let loose upon you, in the shape of flies, that fill the air like dust, and musquitoes whose

bites cover the skin with inflammation, and raise itching to perfect agony. These are a few of the annoyances which a little disturbed my pleasure during the delicious hours I have enjoyed in this hospitable, and to me, ever dear country.

I was glad to make my escape from the murder of the poor hares; for as I looked on their writhing limbs, I could not but think that this little animal *in corporal sufferance feels a pang as great as when a giant dies*; and marvelling at the contradictory nature of man, I directed my course towards some of the public edifices I had not yet seen; and taking sanctuary first in the church, felt my meditations more reconciled to my brethren of mankind, when I found myself within the consecrated walls of St. Martinus Pravidnick. This fabric was reared at the sole charge of Mr. Shagaroff, a Russian China merchant of great goodness and piety, who expended 250,000 rubles in its completion. The portico is extremely beautiful, and the general style of the architecture pure and elegant. It is the finest modern building in the whole city, and in every respect does honour to the taste and devotion of the founder.

Its simplicity made a striking contrast in my mind with the gorgeous magnificence of the *Troitzā* (or monastery of the Trinity) at some distance from Mosco; and which, for splendor and riches, is one of the most wonderful places in the empire. It is a Golconda in itself; a Peru, such a treasure-house is it of gold, diamonds, pearls, and every precious endowment with which piety could adorn the holy place. Besides the interest attached to it as containing the shrine of St. Sergius, it has another of a more secular stamp. This was the sanctuary in which the young Tzar Peter when a boy, and his brother Tzar Ivan, with his sister-wife the turbulent Sophia, embattled themselves against the rebellious Stre-

litzes. To these necessities of Princes, we must attribute so many of the religious buildings in Russia being regularly fortified.

The tomb of St. Sergius is decorated with a canopy of massy silver, supported by large pillars of the same metal. The screen is of the most magnificent workmanship, and the hallowed utensils are covered with jewels. Most churches have several costly dresses for the bishops and officiating priests. These are generally made out of the embroidered palls which are brought into the church with the bodies of deceased nobles buried there. But the sacred habiliments of the *Troitz*a are of the most superb order. There are fifteen different magnificent vestments for the Archimandrite of this monastery, and as many mitres of gold enriched with jewels. One of the ornaments of this priest, worn on his breast instead of a cross, was given to the church by the Empress Elizabeth, and cost 16,000 pounds. One of his robes which he wears on Easter-day, made of crimson velvet embroidered with pearls, is valued at 14,000 pounds. Were I to describe the other vestments, and the variety of crucifixes, mitres, pyxes, golden-cased relics, &c. glittering with gems, I should tire your patience to read and mine to write. Suffice it to say, that Aladin himself, when his wonderful lamp introduced him into the treasury of the Genii, never saw a greater assemblage of riches in one spot, than may be beheld in the *Troitz*a monastery.

Such ornaments to a church certainly dazzle the senses; and I am afraid, too much engage them to allow the heart to have any share in the scene: and if it had, I fear it would be too much employed in admiring the rich productions of the earth to think of the brighter splendors of Heaven. A noble simplicity, appears to me to be the proper character of a building devoted to the worship of the Creator. The

mean, barn-like plan of some modern churches in England, and the bare walls and bald timber-galleries of the generality of the chapels, are equally excessive on the other side. There is a medium between the gorgeous decorations in one country, and the penurious plainness in the other; a sort of structure, in which we might recognise the beauty of holiness, and worship the Giver of All, in a place harmonious with his simplicity and greatness.

I cannot leave you in a better place than the church; so, bidding God bless you, shall for the present say farewell!

LETTER XXIV.

Mosco, June, 1806.

HAVING heard much of the particular gloom, the sort of inquisitorial terrors of the prisons on this side the Baltic, my curiosity was not a little excited to penetrate beyond their grates. On expressing my wish to his Excellency the military Governor, he was so obliging as to send an orderly officer with me to one of these iron securities of the public safety ; having previously given notice to the keeper that I should see every thing within the gates.

The building is of brick, encircled by a high wall flanked with round towers, like an ancient fortress. An officer's guard does duty there, which turned out on my arrival and presented arms. I was conducted through the several passages, apartments or dungeons ; and was shewn all the persons confined for crimes and misdemeanors. Debtors are in a different place. During my walk I had frequent occasion for a handkerchief to *pass between the wind* and my olfactory nerves, as smells, somewhat different from the *pouncet-box* of Harry Percy's *popinjay*, ever and anon assailed my nose !—But it was a jail ! and they who have ever been induced to visit, even in our country, these neglected receptacles for guilt and misery, will not be surprised that in Russia they should be still more noisome. The squalid poverty of the unhappy creatures engendering diseases, their uncleansed persons, filthy garments, and more filthy habits ; and then so many inhabiting one chamber, so impregnates

the air with pestilence, that I only wonder they do not all die of the plague in the course of a month.

There were no cells where a prisoner might have the comfort of being alone: all, whatever might be the individuals' crimes, without any discrimination are stuffed into one apartment, inhaling in every breath a double infection of polluted air and polluted morals. In the midst of this distress there was a single room which bore a less intolerable appearance. It was the hospital, in which lay about sixteen persons. Here I saw something like beds; but in the other chambers the prisoners had no other couches than bare wooden benches. When I view the wretchedness of these places, I cannot but suppose that the sentence of death is no increase of punishment to their inmates. Here they drag on a dying-life, or rather a tortured one: miserable fare, miserable sleep, (for rest we cannot call it on so hard a pillow) and an atmosphere fraught with every calamity which foulness can inflict; what are we to say to such an existence? I would not thrust my vilest enemy into this pit of horrors, for all the security his imprisonment might offer.

Long dark and narrow passages, without ventilation, led to the different rooms. In the centre of the building stood the chapel; the only place in which it was possible to breathe with any safety. It was plainly fitted up and decently clean. Turning from this temporary asylum from the surrounding pestilential vapours, I drew in a most lengthened respiration to serve me during my next exploring, and placing my glove up to my nostrils, followed my conductors along a very gloomy aisle which brought me to what they called the state part of the prison. I found seven persons here, apparently more comfortably ap-

pointed than the forlorn wretches in the humbler department. I was told that these distinguished culprits were officers, committed for the offence of forging notes on the imperial bank. They were condemned to the prison for a certain time; after which their earthly career is to be run, and to terminate, in the mines of Siberia; that they may have ample communion with the specie, and enjoy it for ever in its virgin purity!

There is something in this judgment strikingly just; and assuredly it seems more adapted to the crime than the summary punishment of death. It serves the country on the very point against which the injury was directed; and so while the delinquent is punished, and his example warns others, the government is benefited by his labour. Sir William Meredith, a worthy member of our own senate, speaks so well to this purpose, and his observations have made such an impression on me, that I cannot forbear sanctioning my antipathy to death as a general punishment, by repeating a few of his sentiments.

The Mosaic law (he remarks) ordained that for a sheep or an ox, four and five fold should be restored; and for robbing a house, double; that is, one fold for reparation, the rest for example and punishment: and the forfeiture was the greater as the property was more exposed, so making the preservation of their own a sure guardian of their neighbour's. If the thief came by night it was lawful to kill him in the act; but if he came by day he was only to make restitution; and if he had nothing, he was to be sold for his theft. This is all that God required in felonies, and who can be a better judge of the human heart, than He? Indeed, so much is moderation in these cases the universal sentiment, that I cannot find in history any sample of such laws as the British penal

code excepting that which was framed at Athens by Draco. He made every offence capital upon the modern way of reasoning, "that petty crimes deserve death, and he knew nothing worse for the greatest." His laws, it was said, were written with blood; but they were of short duration, being all, excepting one against murder, repealed by the wise Solon.

When the great Alfred came to the English throne he found the kingdom over-run with robbers: what did he do? Not make his country a forest of gibbets; the expedient of hanging never entered his head. He instituted a police which was to render every township responsible for the felonies committed within its precincts. Thus, property became the guardian of property; and robbery was so effectually stopped that in a very short time a man might travel through the kingdom, unarmed, with his purse in his hand.

Treason, murder, rape, and burning a dwelling-house, were all the crimes that were punishable with death by our good old common law: and such was its reluctance to shed blood, that if recompense could possibly be made, life was not to be touched. Treason being against the King, the remission of that crime lay in the Sovereign's breast. If a ravisher could satisfy the indignation of the injured woman, she might marry him even under the gallows, and take him from death to life. But, now, no restitution can appease the law if it once seizes its victim. A man is hanged for treason, for murder, for forgery, for theft, for stealing half-a-crown! I cannot but recount one instance of many, which shews the iron severity of these Draco laws:

About the time of a great British armament the husband of a poor

woman was pressed and sent to sea, her goods were seized for some debts of his, and she, with two infant children, turned into the streets to beg. She was young, not nineteen, and very handsome. Her beauty might have furnished another woman with ample stores of subsistence: here was at least something to praise as well as pity in the poor unfortunate. She went to a linen-draper's shop, took some coarse linen off the counter and slipped it under her cloak; the shopman saw her, and *she laid it down*: here was restitution; yet for this she was hanged. Her defence was, "that she had lived in credit, and wanted for nothing till the press-gang stole her husband from her; but since then she had no bed to lie on, nothing to give her children to eat, and they were almost naked; and perhaps she might have done something wrong, for she hardly knew what she did." The parish-officers testified the truth of this story: but it seems there had been much shop-lifting about Ludgate; and example was thought necessary, and this unhappy mother was hanged for the satisfaction of a few shop-keepers. When brought to receive sentence she behaved in so frantic a manner, that none could doubt her distracted state of mind: and, O pitiless fate! When she set out for Tyburn the youngest child was sucking at her breast!

There does not occur to my thoughts a proposition more abhorrent to nature and to reason, than that in a matter of property, when restitution is, or can be made, blood should still be required. But in regard to our whole system of criminal law, and much more to our habits of thinking and reasoning upon it, there is a sentence of the Roman orator which would be very aptly addressed to those who can yet reduce the British code to its original purity. — *Nolite, quirites, hanc scævitiæ diutius pati; quæ non modo tot cives atrocissime sustulit, sed humanitatem ipsam ademittit consuetudine incommodorum.*

But, as punishment of crimes is necessary for the sake of deterring others by example, of all modes of punishment, I should prefer that which is productive of the most example. Death is momentary, labour permanent: an execution is soon forgotten; but hard toil is beheld every day, for perhaps a long course of years, and is thus an hourly warning to the commonalty at large. On these principles I approved the condemnation of the Russian forgers to the mines: and as you are equally a friend to humanity with the good Sir William, I will not apologize for leading you such a sweep from the Moscovite dungeons, to hear a few pleadings for the miserable inmates of our own.

But now to return. A little gentleman issued from this state apartment (and in a most sorry state it was, when I had a nearer view!) and addressed me in French. The superintendant who walked with us speaking nothing but Russ, I received the salutation with due courtesy and accepted his offer to become our interpreter. My friend Mr. B——, who was with me, asked him if he were one of the inhabitants of the room before us; he replied no, and added, that his crime was nothing more than taking a servant without a passport. There was an evidence in his look and manner that contradicted his statement, and very clearly demonstrated to us, that we were in the company of an idle vagabond, who probably never had a servant to pass, and who most likely had found his way to the prison for want of a creditable credential for himself. He said he was like ourselves (we were obliged to him for the compliment!) a foreigner, a Pole. Poor, unhappy Poland, how wert thou degraded by thy claimant! He was to be confined for nine months, so long was this prison to travail with its precious burthen; and then he might return to his own country, if he were not stopped again at

the barriers for want of a passport! However, he was very civil; and explained and interpreted for us with all the action and volubility of a Frenchman.

Through him we learnt that the male prisoners labour all day in filing bark into a dust; for tanning I suppose; for here our Pole's interpretations failed us; he either did not know its use, or so bungled at the interpretation, or we were so obtuse in understanding, that we could not at all comprehend what he meant. As we proceeded farther over the prison I could not find any who were confined for any extraordinary crime. One man alone was shewn to me who was a prisoner for a species of murder: he had quarrelled with his neighbour at cards, and by an unlucky blow killed him on the spot. His sentence was soon to be executed; the knout and banishment to Siberia.

I was very curious to see the apparatus for this dreadful punishment, as well as the *dreadful* he who so dextrously executes it on the backs of the wretched mortals whose ill fate lays claim to his abilities. As no one was then immediately in waiting for the ceremony, we requested that the mode of inflicting the knout might be shewn to us. The executioner was a man of huge and herculean aspect, of a dark and sallow complexion, with a determined and ferocious face, having black hair and a grisly beard. When I saw him come forth from his wooden hut in the court-yard of the prison, he reminded me of the Abelino of Venice. His dress was the usual striped shirt of the country, with loose trowsers of a similar linen. He receives ten rubles yearly; and, they say, is the very first practitioner in his line. On an average, one unfortunate wretch a month, suffers, in different degrees of severity according to his offence, under the horrid flail of this tormentor.

Being called upon to exhibit his apparatus and prowess to us, which we the more readily demanded as his victim was to be only a block of wood, he untied a leathern wallet which hung before him, and drew out a pair of iron pincers, constructed for the purpose of slitting the nose; which was done at a snip, taking out a very large piece. Another instrument he exhibited for marking the forehead, or any other part, according to the direction of the sentence. It was shaped like a round brush, being strongly set with iron teeth. The knout (or whip) is formed thus; its handle is of wood, about a foot in length, very strong, and hard woven round with leather. To this is attached a stout and weighty thong, much longer than the handle, fastened in the manner of a flail. Next comes a well-dried strip of Buffalo's hide, much like pliable horn. This the executioner puts on the knout afresh every twenty lashes. Its shape is tapering to a point; being full a quarter of an inch thick, and very long.

Having adjusted this efficient part of the grand instrument of his vocation, he placed himself about four paces from where the supposed culprit was to stand or kneel, and putting the thong fast between his legs, he drew it up behind him, and then seized the handle with both hands; and stepping two paces forward, raising the terrible machine over his head, he made a straight down cut, which fell on a thick board, making a hollow deep enough to bury your finger. This he repeated three or four times. If he knouts every individual with the same force he did the piece of wood, each stroke must find the bone. I omitted to see the thing to which the sufferer is bound; but I was told by one who had witnessed the punishment, that it is a sort of upright block of wood, to which the neck, wrists and knees are strongly fastened. It is deemed reproachful to touch the knout. An opinion that marks the

horror in which it is held, that even any voluntary contact with the instrument is thought an abomination. I shuddered at the apparatus: yet, should there happen any execution during my stay in Russia, I shall certainly contrive to be present at the terrific scene.

On the evening of the day in which I had visited the prison, my friend and myself received an invitation from Prince G—— who was going to be encamped at a short distance from Mosco. His regiment, consisted of three battalions, and being on the peace establishment, contained about seven hundred men in each. We overtook it on its march, and found it proceeding in fine military order, with waggons for transporting the camp equipage, ammunition, &c. &c.

The regiment and ourselves arrived on the ground about eight o'clock in the evening. The men halted and wheeled into line. After piling their arms, they commenced, with great regularity, to pitch their tents; each being set in order by the number that were to inhabit it, eleven being the complement. Of course the regiments which formed the encampment were divided into wings. The colours and drums were in the centre, leaving a wide street in a direct line through the camp. The privates' tents were in three rows; those of the officers were in a street to the rear; and in the rear of them again were the field-officers', and those belonging to the staff, with the tent of the commanding general. A rear and a quarter guard were planted: similar to ours, but at a much greater distance.

The form of the tents is the same that used to be made in England many years ago, but which gave place to the more commodious shape now adopted. Their height is not more than four feet; however, the

wood-work is light and easy of conveyance. The men, in the great General Suwarroff's style, have no other paillasse than the earth and their military coats. Small bell-tents are placed in pairs in front of each company, for the security of the arms, which are piled around its pole; and here they remain, if not wanted for use, day and night.

I do not approve this practice for many reasons. In the first place, the men are separated from their arms: a disunion which ought to be considered by the soldier as great a breach of his martial vows, as a similar parting from his lady would be of his matrimonial ones. Secondly, the uncertainty of the weather renders such a disposition very unfavourable to their being in a good state when they are really wanted. And thirdly, the separation takes from the soldier that religious attachment to his arms which is the best friend of his duty. Like the Roman's adherence to his shield, he ought to look upon the quitting his arms, and the losing his life, as much the same thing. And lastly, in cases of surprise, or sudden summons, what confusion must arise from every man running to a particular spot to seize his weapons! a good soldier should be ever on the alert: and, sleeping with his hand on his musquet, his wedded wife and dear *brown Bess*, be ready at a moment's call to spring upon his feet, and take her in his arms. That the pieces of the Russians might sustain injury by the tenting plan, is clear; but I must do them the justice to say that they take precautions against the evil; the locks being carefully cased, not only in their quarters, but often in the hands of the sentries.

At nine o'clock the whole line turned out, in their foraging caps and great coats, and without arms. The officers fell in two paces in front. The drums kept their station in the centre of each battalion. The

band was in the rear. The retreat, or tattoo was beat. The band then played a sacred piece of music extremely solemn, which the stillness of the evening additionally favoured. A signal was given by the commanding officer, when the whole became uncovered. A silence of a minute took place: it was a pause, so extremely still, as to create an expecting awe in the spectator; and it was broken by the softest, and I may say the most angelic breathings from the choral band, who, accompanied by the music, sung a delightful and simple hymn. During this, each soldier crossed himself with the utmost devotion; and the behaviour of the officers was not less devout. The scene was new to me, and differing widely from the closing of the day in a British camp. I must acknowledge I never witnessed a ceremony so impressive on the feelings, nor an address to the Deity so awful and sublime. As soon as the holy rite was finished, the men put on their caps, faced to the right, and were dismissed.

We passed the remainder of the evening with the Prince, who gave us a very elegant supper, and treated us with a respect and attention which made a comparison the more extreme that I could not help drawing; I mean the immense distance at which personages of his rank hold even the officers serving under them. While we sat round the table, the subalterns and captains of his regiment stood at one end, and in that position partook of the repast. As it is the custom of the country, they did not appear humiliated; but enjoyed their share of the passing dishes with sufficient *gout* and good humour. Regiments, here, do not mess as we do in England; but every man eats his morsel alone: and frequently it is but a morsel; as the scantiness of their pay will not admit a very ample provision. I may dine pleasantly with individuals of these northern corps; but no where amongst them can we find gay,

social dinners, such as those I have enjoyed with you on the Bank guard, or on that of St. James's.

I think, in one of my former letters, I animadverted on the tightened garments of the Russian soldiers. But at this encampment they seemed so much more excessive in their smallness, that I must needs reiterate my indignation against the abominable mode. Their waists are so pinched by cloaths and a leathern belt, that part of their *inward man* must be dislodged from his original quarters, and forced, either up into the higher chest or down into their *lower one*. You will not find it difficult to understand what I mean by this appellation of the baser repository of the human machinery! I took my hint from the fair sex, whom I have frequently heard dignify with the name of a pain in the *chest*, any complaint from the throat down to the knee; and as with us the shape,

Small by degrees, and beautifully less,
From the full bosom to the slender waist,

is entirely appropriated to the ladies, you must not be surprised that I should denominate things according to their vocabulary, when I am writing of fashions which seem, by nature, attributable to them only. Knowing the bravery of the Russian officers, it *frets me* to see them case their manliness in such maidenly ligatures. Some carry it to such a pitch as to sport a waist of hardly more than a few inches in circumference. Indeed, so consequential do they think it, that when on my first arrival at St. Petersburg I expressed my wonder at their unmartial shapes, I was told an anecdote that explained to me how they were formed.

Previous to the battle of Austerlitz, when the army marched out to

join the Austrians, a female having occasion for art to support nature, applied to one of the first boddice-makers in the city for the requisite encirclements. But he frankly told her he could not obey her commands, having a large order then in hands, to follow the army which had just passed the frontiers. I will not vouch for the veracity of this *histoire*; but I scarcely doubt it, as it cannot be possible to bring any shape, bad or good, into the form here in fashion, without compresses as strong as those which used to be drawn on the ladies of old by the help of their staymaker's foot.

On the sight of a Russian officer, what first strikes the eye of a stranger is his wasp-like waist and enlarged thigh. The girded belt above, increases the swell of the limb, and the shortened coat displays the whole of its magnitude. Their high hats and feathers so overburthen the slender adhesion of the body to the hip, that you only wonder the inadequate support does not break in twain. You may form some idea of the oddity of their appearance: but when you add to this feminine part of their toilet, their fierce and military countenances, the contrast is as strange as it is surprising. They allow their whiskers to grow to such length as to meet along the edge of their chin: the effect is terrific, giving a wild ferocity to their aspects. This Mars-like beard, with the immense breadth of their chests, is well calculated for war; and were it not for the absurd disproportion in their middles, I should say that, in all points, I never saw a nobler body of officers as well as men. They are all as erect as an arrow, and carry themselves with the most exact military attention.

I hope I may one day see these fine fellows dressed to the advantage of which their really excellent figures are capable; (as I understand that

the Emperor, being informed of the inconveniencies of the present mode, and of its injurious effects on the health, intends speedily to issue an order to change this part of their uniform; and so, both for grace and utility, once more set the body at liberty.

Boots and loose pantaloons are in general use throughout the army. The climate forbids gaiters; and certainly in all cold countries, the former are preferable. Every private soldier wears a sword; but for what reason I could not learn, as they are never taught the use of one. A musquet and a good bayonet are all the weapons a foot soldier should carry. On them he should depend. More divides his attention, and is very apt to make him negligent of the whole.

I was much indebted to the Prince G — for his politeness in explaining many objects of my military curiosity. Indeed the kindness that I have received from the most illustrious residents of this hospitable capital, is beyond my thanks: but they *used me after their own honour and dignity*; and so generous a consciousness must speak my sense of obligation. To the Governor-general I am particularly indebted for a thousand marks of friendship; and one token of his esteem I shall ever preserve as an expressive emblem of his warm and cherishing heart. I mean a valuable pelisse, with which His Excellency presented me the other day. That it was his gift, makes it estimable to me; but independent of that value with which my respect for his worth would have stamped a shroud of the commonest bear, had it come from him; this pelisse is of the rarest and most costly materials, being lined with the skins of *unborn lambs*. It is difficult to obtain them at any price, as they are cut from the side of their heaving mother, just at the moment preceding that which would have given them birth. There is some-

thing terribly shocking to humanity in this relation : and it makes one shudder to think that nature does not groan under man's wants only, but under his luxuries too.

The wool of these little victims is beautifully soft, and in small silky curls of a silvery grey. The skins are brought from Persia, Bucharia, and the Kalmuc territory. The vegetable lamb, which is said to grow between the Volga and the Don, has had the reputation of furnishing these furs (if so tender a material may be so called ?) ; however, the imposition was not long believed ; their less blameless origin is now too well known. From description, the plant called the vegetable-lamb (if any such there be !) has a coat resembling the wool in question, and used to be prepared by the natives where it grew, into warm clothing for themselves. But even this account is now discredited ; as of all the travellers into those countries, none remember having ever seen this strange plant, or of knowing any one who had.

The Tartars who vend the skin of the real lamb, still persist in declaring it to be a produce of the earth ; but so rare, that they exact the most exorbitant prices for a pelisse. And that they make it rare, by very seldom applying the Cesarean operation to the innocent victims of their avarice, is a happy circumstance. By the story they invented to conceal their cruelty, human nature has the comfort of seeing that they are ashamed of it. Perhaps it is politic too ; for certainly, in wearing the skins, it would be more pleasant to think that they were plucked from an herb, than from the panting side of a poor sacrificed animal.

Besides these rarities from Persia, the most valuable furs of a more

redundant growth come from Siberia and the adjoining provinces. The black fox and sables are in the highest esteem; but all are extremely expensive, being used in every winter dress of the rich. There are other fine furs from the Kalmuc country. But for the bear, racoon, &c. which are brought in such quantities from America to England, you have them infinitely better in quality, and cheaper in price, than we can find those of their hairy brethren in Russia. It is a very mistaken idea that these defences from the cold are as reasonable in this country as they are necessary. A man may expend a very decent fortune upon the wardrobe of his wife and daughters, before he sees them properly be-furred for the winter.

This is rather a *mal-apropos* subject in the month of June! And for fear the doctrine of sympathies should be so strong with you as to throw your blood into a boil at the contemplation of such suffocating habiliments, I shall very wisely withdraw, before you consign me and my furs to a still hotter region! Adieu! Adieu!

LETTER XXV.

Mosco, June, 1806.

IT is now deep mid-summer! Mosco, deserted by its most amiable inhabitants, has no charms for me. All are gone to their country seats, there to court the breezes until the season of frost and gaiety recalls them to this social scene. What then have I to do in this place! You know I never ~~was~~ fond of the sentimental amusement of haunting places deserted by former joys. To me ~~it~~^{it} is distracting; memory is too busy, regret too poignant, to allow your friend to sigh romantically over the walks of Mosco. I must off. For to me it is now a tomb; nay emptier than a tomb, for both the soul and body of what I best love, have left it. But, if Heaven grants me life, next winter hither shall I return; and then, my indulgent correspondent, you shall have a few more records of the happy, thrice happy days, I pass in this ever dear city. When I entered it, little was I aware of the sentiments with which I quit it: sentiments, which give me a joy in all around; and an interest in every thing which belongs to the country that gave the object of them birth.

To-morrow I shall set out for St. Petersburg, and in the course of a few days be so much the nearer you. That at least is some comfort in passing from the region which contains one dear friend, that I am approaching the confines of another. But only approaching! Many a sun and moon must roll over my head before I shake hands with you

in England. Yet while writing thus, I almost feel myself close to you: and in our usual manner of recounting the events of the day to each other, shall draw in my chair, and tell you how admirably my sagacity has blessed me with a companion for to-morrow's travel, or *travail*! which you like; for, I am sure I shall have pains enough before I am delivered of my burthen.

Mr. B—— and I had settled to keep the road together; he in his carriage and I in mine. That he is not the object of my present lamentations you can easily believe. But my evil stars brought an addition to our party, who I am now going to introduce to you, merely by character; for I would sooner condemn myself to trudge with him from here to Jericho, than do such an injury to my friend as to present him in *propria persona*.

The Marquis de—— is the gentleman. And the lesson I have learnt from the method in which this personage authorized himself to become one of our party will, during my continental tour and for ever after, teach me to be careful of suddenly saying YES; and of believing that all noblemen are noble; and that smooth manners do not often conceal a very rugged heart. In short, my noviceship was most egregiously taken in by the titled Italian; and I fear from what I have seen, and more that I have heard, that I shall have no trifling reasons to increase my repentance for my over hasty *yea*. My Marquis, heaven knows! may be honest; but I am too feelingly convinced that he is poor. And yet that is no crime, as I can bear witness, who am myself, perhaps, not many whits more worthy in that respect; and assuredly much poorer in the knowledge of making my way through the world. However the old adage *experientia*, &c. will profit me a little.

The mode in which I became encumbered with this gentleman was, I must do him the justice to say, as much owing to my own folly as to his wisdom. As soon as he delivered his silver-tongued wish; had I taken a moment's thought, he might as easily have been civilly answered in the negative, as most stupidly greeted with an assent. But, as I said before, my evil star ruled: and having been hailed by an angel on my arrival at Mosco, it was decreed as a small service to the city, that I should take a devil out of it. This said demon, who was fated to become my familiar, I had met at dinner at the Prince V——'s. He there learnt that I was shortly going to St. Petersburg, and had a vacant place in my carriage. Presuming on the popular notion that every Englishman who is seen in a foreign country, must be *rich* and a *lord*, he surprised me next morning with a visit; and with many polite speeches conferred on me that honourable title. I soon undeceived him with regard to my right to the coronet, but with the utmost of my eloquence, I could not persuade him that my purse was not as full as he seemed determined to think it. He had travelled, appeared intelligent, spoke several languages, possessed an excellent address, and in so easy a manner requested the favour of being allowed to be my companion to St. Petersburg, that I instantly consented. In the first place, I was pleased with his conversation, as far as it went; it was agreeable to me to do a civility to any gentleman; and as he was a nobleman, and talked carelessly of expences, I could not doubt that he had sufficient to pay his own.

But I was very green, my friend! and have to thank him for bringing my experience to so rapid a ripening. A few visits from my Marquis, added to some enquiries I made, soon told me how precipitate I had been: however, information came too late; to retract was im-

possible; I must take him. In vain, I now see that his fund of intelligence is of similar extent with that of the Sharper in the Vicar of Wakefield, whose *cosmogony of the world* talked Moses Primrose out of his father's horse. My Marquis has talked me out of horses, and carriage, and patience into the bargain; and to-morrow, I must set him and all his estates, viz, his uniform and decorations! by my side for a long *tête-à-tête* of five or six days! I confess the blockhead part I acted in the affair deserves the punishment: and so being resigned to suffer for my folly, I shall bid you good night; promising to finish my letter at the first halting place.

Voskresensky, June 19th. Thursday night.

Well! Our disasters with my amiable companion are begun: but how they will end, I cannot guess. Perhaps conduct us back to the same prison we so lately explored, in a different style from our last visit. Indeed, my poor friend B — and I have no contemptible chance, by the vagaries of our third, of being marched retrogradely, to make a happy triumvirate with the captive Pole. But you shall know all in order.

Having arranged every thing this morning for our journey, and made an agreement with the Istvostchicks for horses to Voskresensky, we were preparing to enter our carriages, when the postilions refused to touch the reins, saying the whole of their fare had not been paid. Knowing to the contrary, we insisted on their mounting; they were obstinate: and turning to the Marquis who could speak Russ, we requested him to express our remonstrances more plainly to the men than we had done. But applying at once to my *ci-devant* servant's argument,

he started forward, and made such active use of a huge stick upon the backs of the poor devils, that he soon compelled them to seek refuge on their boxes.

Having brought them to their duty, we were just going to proceed, when a detention arose from his side. Though victor, he had not escaped quite clear; his shoulder knot and coat flap were nearly torn off in the scuffle, and hung dangling in a most pitiable plight. Undoubtedly his raiment was none of the newest: and in repairing the present fractures we perceived that they had not been the first: our Hector had been in civil wars before. Some way or other our servants got the gaping apertures stitched up; and at a little distance, I defy the best eyes to discover that his cloaths look any thing the worse. He treated the accident with his usual *nonchalance*; "it was a trifle, an old coat!" True, for it was a uniform of the Emperor Paul's; and consequently could not be very juvenile. However, all mishaps being remedied, we set forwards at about three o'clock.

We travelled very quietly for twenty-five versts, which brought us into the centre of a village, where the drivers stopped, we supposed merely to refresh the horses. But our heroes of the whip had been all this time chewing the cud of their flagellation; and seizing the moment for revenge, they began to take off the horses, declaring that they would not stir a step further. We stopped this *manœuvre*, holding the animals in the harness. This produced a violent altercation; ourselves, and the vociferous Marquis, all talking at once; the drivers bawling their accusations, resolution, and even threats; our servants defending our cause with part of the villagers, who, incensed by the representations of the drivers, poured on us the most abusive language; others, standing

aghast, with their hatchets in their hands, as undecided how to act. In short, the disturbance was so great as to menace every thing tremendous. "Let us send back to Mosco!" exclaimed I. "Let us send them to the devil!" exclaimed a thundering voice; and the Marquis's cudgel was again raised: it was the opening of the temple of Janus, a general battle ensued. The scene was dreadful for a few minutes: but the club of our Hercules at length proved a talisman, for after a few ineffectual stands, with broken heads and maimed limbs, they all fled before it, and left us in quiet possession of our carriages and their cavalry. Mr. B—— took the place of his chariotceer, and I took that of mine. The Marquis placing himself in my vehicle, which was a barouche, assumed an attitude of most direful menace. He drew his sword, and waving and flourishing it in the air, in loud and broken Russ, vowed the death and slaughter of all who should attempt to impede our exit. Thus, driving our champion like the heroes of old, we set off full speed through the village, amid the scamperings of the poor peaceful inhabitants, and the astonished shouts of the rebellious drivers and the mass of boors whom they had drawn into their conspiracy.

The spot we now essayed to find was twenty-eight versts onward. Not one of us had ever been there, or knew any thing of its situation, only that it lay towards the north. Therefore, on the wide road we sallied, like true knights errant, to take our chance for a good or evil termination to our adventure. The impression our titled companion made on me, at the moment of our triumphal departure, I shall never forget; and as it was thoroughly *unique*, I cannot forbear presenting you with so singular a curiosity.

Monsieur le Marquis de —— is about forty-five; pale, dark, and

lank visaged ; his hair sable, somewhat grizzled ; his person gaunt, with an inequality in his right hip, which gives to his motion a rather grotesque combination of the crab and a man. The Knight of La Mancha is exquisitely pourtrayed in his face and figure ; but there the resemblance halts, as he has not a thought in any degree comparative with the mental part of the Spanish hero. But for a spirit of inflicting buffets, and brandishing his death denouncing blade, you have already seen that our drivers did not fall short, in blows, of any of the unfortunates who came under the flaying steel of the renowned Don Quixote.

After wandering about for a long time, driving hither and thither without a direction, at last (having gone more than six or seven versts on a wrong track) we arrived at Voskresensky late in the evening. Being lucky enough to find a civil host and comfortable house (a precious sight in a Russian village!) I have ventured to take this epistle from my letter-case, without any fear of adding to its blots, the less agreeable ones of grease and dirt. I am scribbling on a very clean table ; and as I know not when I may be so well appointed again, I might be tempted to go on ; but not being at all certain into what sea of troubles our doughty pilot may yet steer us, I will not finish my letter till we come to the end of our journey.

We came thus far out of the direct road to St. Petersburg, to visit the celebrated monastery of the Resurrection, otherwise called the New Jerusalem, which was founded by Nichon the Patriarch, and his residence for many years. We shall remain at our *hotel* to-night ; and intending to set off to-morrow morning at six o'clock to view the temple, shall, now having brought ourselves and sticks and staves to a good rest, wish you the same, till I address you again from our next sleeping place.

Friday Evening, Voskresensky.

Being just returned from our pilgrimage to the Holy Land ; before a storm which is now brewing, sweeps off the vividness of my impressions, according to my promise, I will transmit them to paper.

The monastery of the venerable patriarch externally resembles other great religious establishments of this country. Its walls are strongly castellated, guarded by high warlike towers and military bulwarks. It covers a vast extent of ground, in the centre of which stands the grand and celebrated church called the New Jerusalem, built by Nitchon in imitation of the Holy Sepulchre in Palestine : so determined was he to be exact to his model, that he sent an Italian architect to Jerusalem to bring away a plan of the Sepulchre in all its parts.

During our walk around the walls, we fortunately encountered the Archimandrite (or abbot) who accosted us with politeness ; and afterwards shewed us an attention that was quite unexampled. We should have thought a man of his high ecclesiastical dignity sufficiently condescending, that he sent one of the monks to usher us over the edifice ; but he, in the most gracious manner, took the task on himself ; and conducted us throughout the whole of the monastery, not omitting the smallest point which contained any object of interest.

In the great building are more than forty chapels, consecrated to the Apostles, John the Baptist, Saints, Patriarchs, and other pious persons who were venerated in the original church of the Sepulchre. To these are added oratories dedicated to the canonized of Russia, St. Alexander Nefsky, &c. As the convent bears the appellation of New Jerusalem,

the villages, hills, and country around, have likewise assumed the names of Palestine. Here I saw the mounts Carmel and Tabor, the sea of Galilee, the Jordan, the village Emmaus, &c. &c.

Our pious conductor, who pointed out these scenes with religious awe, was about thirty-two or three. His remarks shewed him to be a man of extensive knowledge. Indeed, when he mentioned the school in which he had been, a place so well adapted for the planting and cultivation of all that improves the heart and mind, I no longer was surprised at his courtesy and accomplishments: he had passed several years in the *Troitz*a with the learned and saint-like Platon. As we conversed, I found him intimately acquainted with the religious literature of the passed centuries, as well as thoroughly master of the classics, and of every species of reading that can enlighten and adorn the understanding. He was also well read in our English writers; and spoke with particular praise of Sherlock and Porteus, of Dr. Young and Cowper.

He led us into a spacious tower that overlooked one of the rivers, the banks of which were richly shaded with trees. "This," said he, "is the house of David, whence he beheld the beautiful Bathsheba bathing: and those are the gardens of Uriah."

This was rather an odd point in the good monarch's history for monks to celebrate. Yet I do not think it amiss; for, as the New Testament holds up an example of sinless perfection; in the Old, we have one that transgressed, and yet was approved of Heaven. Not that we are to copy the sin as we ought the virtue; but by considering the character of David, we may be cured of despair and vice at the same moment.



W. A. Foster 1881

of Stadler could

An Archimandrite in his Ordinary Habit

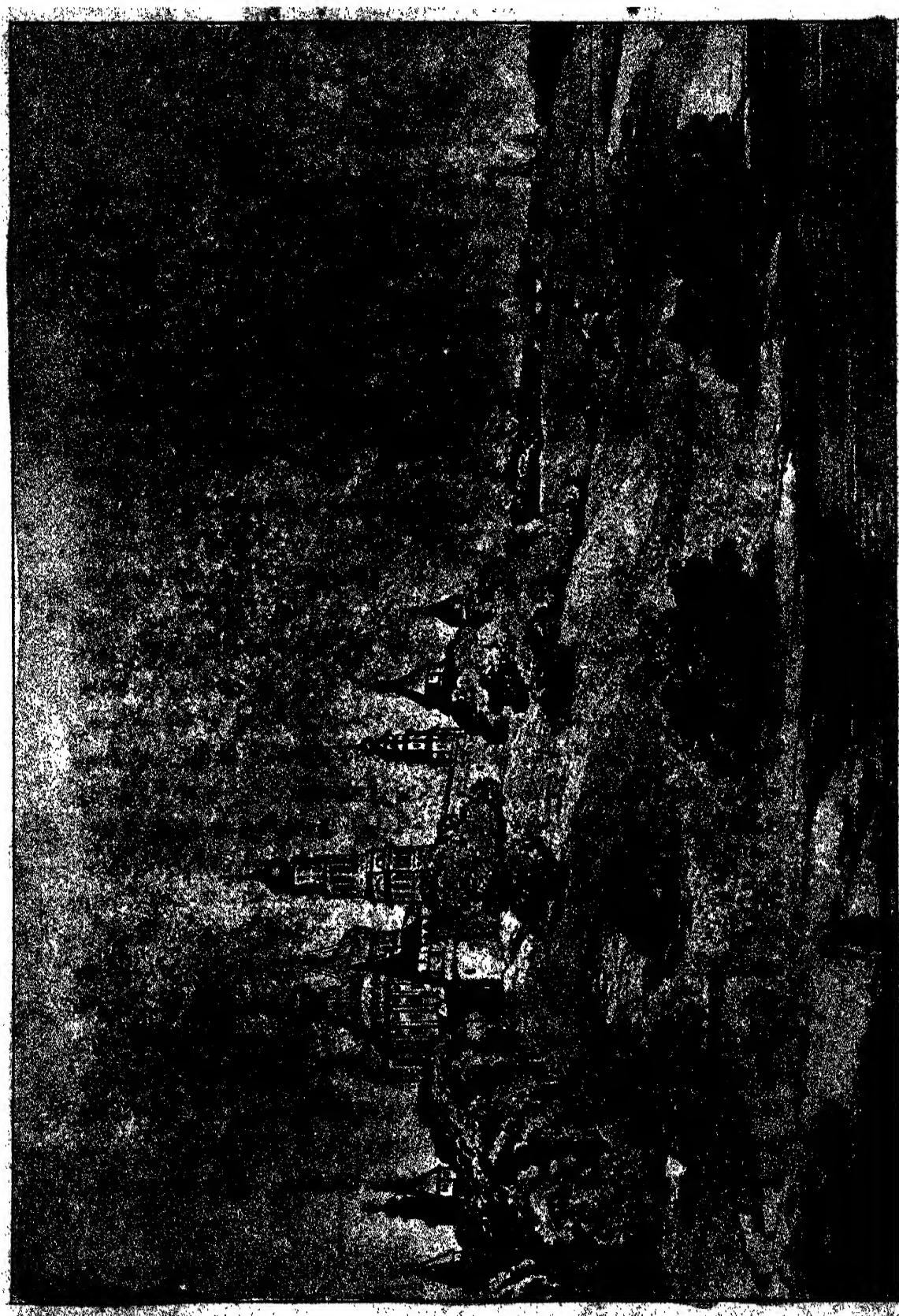
'The King of Israel is declared to be *a man after God's own heart*: not when he was in his sins; not when he took Bathsheba to his arms and slew her husband: but when he acknowledged the justice of Nathan's sentence, and humbled himself with remorse in dust and ashes. I have often wondered at hearing people of any reflection find fault with the holy epithets which the inspired writings give to David; and always, bring up these two events of his life in support of their argument. All seem to remember that he sinned, ~~but~~ none that he repented; and it was his repentance that gained him the title of *the servant of the Lord*. The Scripture account of this monarch, instead of being considered with captious remark, is, next to the Gospel, the most gracious history that ever was revealed to man; for it declares, that though the sins of a man be red as scarlet, by repentance they shall be washed white as snow: and thus, this promised mercy of God is made evident by the example of David. Having so lately been in the company of the saintly abbot, you will not be surprised that I have caught a little of the spirit of sermonising. But in truth, when the stumbling-block attached to the character of the "sweet songster of Israel" fell in my path, I could not, with a safe conscience, pass by, without putting forth my feeble hand to take it out of the way.

The monks of this foundation are thirty-two. All habited in black stuff, formed like the robes of the secular priests. They wear on their heads a sort of bonnet, covered with a capuchin falling down their backs and terminating in two points. The Archimandrite was clad in silk, with the badge of some sacred order suspended from his neck. St. Basil, as usual in this country, rules these dedicated people.

We were next conducted into a library of some extent. But what

would have been its principal treasure, the curious and valuable manuscripts collected by Nikon during his supremacy, are now, I believe, in the Emperor's possession. None are here. Two relics were shewn to us; one, a history of the world written in the Patriarch's own hand, and the other a copy of the sacred Scriptures with his revisions and remarks. We saw several large portraits of this extraordinary man; but from the style, I doubt their being likenesses. Our hospitable conductor now led us into his own apartments, where we took refreshments of coffee, &c. before he attended us to the interior and environs of the building.

We passed out at a little gothic gate, and shaped our course along the foot of the embattled walls, and through a romantic wood, gradually descending the hill on which the New Jerusalem towered above us. We soon found ourselves on an extensive plain beautifully enriched with trees, and watered by the Jordan and Euphrates. To be sure the latter river has made rather a jump from the plains of Babylon to meet the Judean flood under the walls of this monastery. But if its Patriarch could bring the Jordan from its native springs so far, it required very little more stretch of power to transport the Euphrates also; and he was very right to fulfil all his wishes while he was about it. Here then flowed the two famous rivers of Palestine and Assyria; and though in miniature, the effect was fine and solemn. The convent rose majestically amidst the thick umbrage of the wood; and its golden domes and high minarets shone in religious magnificence from that commanding spot. My sketch will give you a slight idea of its bold and interesting situation; and for your sake, as well as my own, I cannot but lament that I have not the pencil of a Leutherbrough or a Wilson, more sublimely to pourtray the grand objects of this country.





After dwelling for some time on its extent and grandeur, and on the associating ideas which ought to present themselves on this consecrated place; our pious abbot conducted us through another avenue in the wood to a little white building embosomed amid drooping larches; trees whose heads towered far above the minarets of the Hermitage: for so this retreat was named. In this secluded spot did the austere Nichon spend most of the days in twenty years: not days of greatness and of splendor; they, like Wolsey's, had passed away: but days of silence, solitude, and voluntary punishment. Here he led a life of pains and fatigues, inflicting on himself the severest penalties for the offences of the past. When we recall this man's capacious mind, with the magnitude of his plans, and the strength of his understanding; we are struck with wonder that all this reason should become the slave of superstition. Is it possible that he, who copied out the Scriptures with his own hand, and commented on their contents, could see any utility to the soul in whips and scourges? But so the fact was. And I saw one instance, that proved he did not inflict this penitential chastisement with a sparing hand. It was an immense iron chain, of a weight so enormous as is hardly credible; to which was suspended a huge cross of the same ponderous metal. This terrible load he always wore during his fasts and humiliations, hanging from his neck. His bed consisted of a single stone, with one of a smaller size for a pillow: both were fixed in a low and confined cell. In the Hermitage are two small chapels. The staircase leading to them is spiral, and so narrow, that with difficulty one person can squeeze up at a time.

Our friend the abbot told us that the Patriarch did not always dwell here; but at the short intervals between the long fasts and other peni-

tential periods, resided in the monastery. On the commencement of the fasts he returned hither again; and they saw no more of him till the time expired; and then he re-appeared; exhausted and worn with watching and penance, but uttering no uneasiness for aught but, what he termed, his inexpiable offences. Can we imagine a more pitiable state of mind?

Immediately after Nichon's abdication of his rank of Father of the Russian church, in 1658, he retired to this his favourite place of New Jerusalem. He remained here until the machinations of his enemies caused him to be removed to the convent of Therapont, in the cells of which he suffered the most rigorous treatment. However, with the death of the Tzar Alexey Michaelovitch ceased his imprisonment; and he gained the imperial permission to pass the rest of his days in this Hermitage. Unfortunately he never had the comfort of seeing so dear a spot again, which, though watered by his tears, was yet the place he had consecrated to the Deity, and where he found consolation in pouring out his soul in penitence and prayer. He died on the road in the year 1684. But his remains were brought to the monastery, and buried with due solemnity in one of the chapels of the great church. His tomb is covered with dark velvet; and over it hangs the chain and cross I have already described. A very fit emblem of the more iron bonds his mistaken judgment had laid upon his reason and his life.

Having performed the whole of our pilgrimage, and even ended it at the shrine of the Patriarch, we bid a grateful adieu to the Archimandrite our attentive conductor; and returned to our village, proposing immediately to press forward towards St. Petersburg.

Monday, June 23d.

We proposed, my good friend, but alas! during the visit to New Jerusalem, our characters had travelled after us from the last stage; and not a man nor a horse was allowed to approach our carriages. Boors had arrived, who gave such a terrific account of our behaviour, positively affirming that the postilions were dead of the wounds we had inflicted on them; and that others of the broken headed villagers were in an expiring state. In short the story spread so widely, and was believed so currently, that all Voskresensky threatened to rise at once and rid the world of such tyrants. Indeed the business became so serious immediately after I last closed this paper, and finding it impossible to appease the clamour, or secure ourselves any other way, we literally fortified our abode; and placed regular watches for four days and nights, until a courier could return, who, on this danger, we had sent express to the Governor-general at Mosco for redress.

After a most inconvenient suspense of another twenty-four hours, our messenger arrived with credentials, investing us with full authority to command all we required; and what was not the least agreeable part of his embassy, he brought along with him the very drivers whom report had murdered. His Excellency had given orders that he should take them up in his way: and after having seen them receive an additional disciplining from the police, for their behaviour, they were made to declare their penitence at our feet.

The sight of the Governor's order, and the appearance of the postilions, immediately quieted the villagers; and mounting our carriages, we left Voskresensky, drawn by the very horses with which we had

entered, and driven by our late rebellious charioteers, now all attention and obsequiousness.

Barouche, Tuesday, &c. &c.

Determining to make up for lost time, we soon got into the high road, and howled along as swiftly as if we had had Pegasus himself yoked to our car. I travelled this very road but a few months ago. In vain I now look round to recognise any object of my former observations: it seems totally a new scene. When I last beheld it, it was covered with snow; now, all is one wide stretch of green landscape. The one shewed Winter in his direst reign; the other Summer, though I am sorry to say, not in her sweetest charms. All is flat and uninteresting. The villages boast no little spots cultivated with Swiss beauty and comfort. No tree, or creeping tendril grows near the doors and windows of these habitations. The russet cottages of England, overgrown with the blushing rose and fragrant honey-suckle; their pretty gardens, and domesticated animals, all are wanting here. The absence of the snow, and the unveiling of the grass, seem the only marks that winter has disappeared: at least the only pleasing assurance, for as to disagreeable proofs, in the forms of heat and dust, we have enough of them. A burning sun continually over our heads, scorching our very souls; and the dust, by way of soothing our pride, while it torments our skin, eyes, and lungs, makes us like so many Fneases, always move in a cloud!

The natives are no less sensible of the heat than we Englishmen. They change the fashion and the substance of their dress with the season: and as I have already pictured their winter costume, I shall now give you a sketch of their summer attire. The men go with naked feet,





1894-1895

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A Russian Peasant in her Summer Dress

seldom any covering on their head, and literally wear nothing more than a shirt and trowsers of striped linen. The shirt is closed at the neck in a peculiar manner, with a round buckle precisely like the clasp used by the ancients. These people are particularly fond of children; a proof, I think, of the natural goodness of their hearts. You will more frequently see the men, when returning from toil, taking their infants in their arms and caressing them, than seeking the company of their wives. The women during the warm season, wear a blue and yellow dress of dyed linen, closed down the front with buttons, and fastened on the shoulders with clasps. It is called a *serafan*. Their heads are usually bound with handkerchiefs of various colours; and when more gay, a bandeau of gold lace and beads encircles their foreheads. The hair is brought to knot on the top of the head, and its back part is ornamented with a fanciful sort of net-work, tassels and fringe of bugles, glass beads and different coloured silks or worsted, resembling the decoration which the American Chiefs wear in the place of a Highland Scot's *philabeg*. I enclose you drawings of these lightly attired males and females.

But while I am on the subject, I cannot omit mentioning a strange custom which they have amongst them; one very repugnant to nature, and to British feelings, even shocking to think on. Fathers marry their sons to some blooming girl in the village at a very early age, and then send the young men either to Mosco or St. Petersburg to seek employment, leaving their brides a few days after their marriage to the care of their parents. At the expiration of some years, when the son returns to his cottage, he finds himself the nominal father of several children, the offspring of his own parent! who had deemed it his duty thus to supply the place of a husband to the young wife. This is done all over Russia, and is never considered a hardship by the parties.

Indeed so far from it, the fashion continues; and when the son becomes a resident in his native village, if he have a numerous stock thus raised to him, he marries them off, sends them a packing; and then enjoys himself, like a Turk in his seraglio, amongst their wives.

Whether this horrid, unnatural, and immoral custom arose from any policy in the nobles, who might issue an order to this effect, to compensate to themselves for perhaps some great mortality amongst their young serfs in the case of long and destructive wars, I cannot tell; but I think it very likely; as no propensity in nature could ever dictate so abominable a perversion of nature. As it is the interest of the owner of slaves to increase their population, it is also to his advantage to allow of the emigration of the young men to the cities as much as possible; for, as he receives an annual pecuniary acknowledgment from all who leave his village to pursue their own plans, in proportion as they amass money, he may raise the rent they pay him for themselves; and so improve his revenue by their fortune. On these grounds, I suppose the horrid practice I have just mentioned, is permitted to pass uncensured. The nobleman finds his lands stocked with a growing generation of slaves, and he cares not by what means they were planted. This absorbing passion of self-interest, how does it possess the whole world; — how does it even alloy natures which otherwise might not be far from heaven! There exists an old law, happily now obsolete, which empowered the proprietor of a slave, not only to receive his yearly rent, but on any pretence, to sieze the harvest of his industry. Such is not tolerated now: on the reverse, a part of the hard-earned riches of the serf is appropriated to purchase his freedom. Many of these industrious vassals are possessed of wealth to the amount of 30,000*l.*, and sometimes more.

The country, for the greater part of the way, now became very woody; and after travelling over the first hundred *versts* from Mosco, like passing through the first village, the fac-simile of all the rest, the monotony was so unbroken that I might safely have slept the remainder of my journey without missing any very interesting view. Near Valdaia the ground certainly rises a little, gives you a few undulations which, like a flattering ripple on the sea, seems to promise something stronger, but smooths again. All the varieties we met, were here and there a marsh in which a huge piece of granite reared its head, and a few passing groupes of natives driving their merchandize to distant markets.

Amongst our scanty complement of entertainment (for our titled companion having gained his point, and perhaps exhausted his powers in the last affray, very sagaciously sought to replenish them with the sweet interchange of food and sleep), the canal and falls of Borovitsky struck across our recollection. B—— and I being pretty well wearied of our dull drive, determined to visit them, and ordered the postilions accordingly.

At Vislina Valochock the canal is first descried, laden with vessels full of productions from the interior; human industry having here united the river Tvertza with the Meutza; connecting, by an inland navigation, the Caspian with the Baltic Sea. We enquired whether there were any barks collected at the falls, in one of which we might descend; and being answered in the affirmative, we hired horses to take us to these torrents, and afterwards bring us round to the great road at Valdaia. The circuit we made by this *detour*, might be about a hundred and seventy *versts*. On reaching Speckinskoy, the *prestan* (or port), we dispatched our vehicles to Borovitsky.

We found numbers of craft on the eve of going down, and placing ourselves in one of them, soon entered on the descent, which was by no means tremendous, although the rapidity of the motion was surprising. This torrent is a long inclining surface of water of about thirty versts : and to give you an idea of the velocity with which the barks moved, we went twenty-five versts in three-quarters of an hour. The most alarming circumstance in the exploit, is to see the constant changes the vessels make in their shapes from the violence of the waters. They bend like paper, and are so admirably constructed, as to take the undulating form of the rising wave. Were they of firmer texture they must inevitably be dashed to pieces. As it is, they bound like a feather on the water, and are carried by its impetuosity safely to the bottom of the fall. With all this, it requires some nerve to make the excursion ; yet by no means so much as to shoot London-bridge before an ebb tide.

Around this place the country assumes a more interesting air ; and independent of the canal, very well repaid us for the sweep we had taken to approach it. The remainder of the road from Borovitsky to Valdaia, is by no means unpicturesque, and gradually becomes more so as we advance to the Valdaia hills and lake. The banks of this piece of water are unquestionably beautiful ; and the centre is not less charming, being magnificently adorned with a fine island containing a monastery.

As we drove along, peeping into every copse, dingle, and alley green of the glowing landscape, I was much pleased with the numerous bands of Ukraine peasants and their droves, as they crossed our path. At night their appearance was still more picturesque. Formed into little circles, in various attitudes, around a rustic fire which they had lighted on

the earth, they would sit and sing, while their cattle grazed amongst the herbage of the trees. There was something very cheerful in these midnight groupes; and we were not sorry to find, that as they were travelling to St. Petersburg, we should have this moving scenery the whole way.

Another species of itinerant picturesque, but in smaller herds, occurred. They are called Gypsies with you, but here, and generally over the continent, they are known by the appellation of Bohemians. The wives of this strange race, whose origin is so uncertain, are celebrated for their extraordinary mode of dancing and singing. Many little colonies of them are established near Mosco, whence they occasionally visit the city, and are hired by the nobility to add to the amusements of the evening. It is pleasing to observe the comfort, ease, and regularity with which they transport themselves from place to place. They have excellent tents to pitch at the time of rest, and the cradles in which the camp-furniture is conveyed, form good beds. We passed many of their canvass villages, the disposition of which was wild and Arabic to the most romantic degree; and the inhabitants, employed in sundry domestic and culinary concerns, presented the most interesting scenes, either for the pencil or the heart.

The children who ran by the side of our carriage, were extremely beautiful, as the eastern character was finely marked in their countenance, besides their copper complexions, raven hair, and large black eyes. Beards and mustachios increased the ferocious looks of the men, as well as did the wide caftan and Asiatic cap. But there was majesty blended with this fierceness; a something that strongly declared their consciousness of independence: and, when you viewed their strength,

their air, and the fearless penetration of their glances; and united with these, their probable wants, the result produced sensations not very favourable to the idea of falling in with them in the depth of night. However, I believe that any alarm of the sort would be groundless; as I understand their depredations seldom extend beyond a stray lamb from the farmer's flock, and a few poultry; or any other thing calculated to supply their uncertain meals. The women devote their wits to reading the hands of the village lasses, and gather a copeck or two as their reward.

There is something very extraordinary in these wandering people; and an obscurity envelopes their origin that appears almost impossible to penetrate. That they are called Gypsies, we are told in England, arises from a tradition of their springing from Egypt. How then do they derive the name of Bohemians; which it seems they bear over almost all the continent? They shew no resemblance to the present natives of Bohemia: neither are their features in the least like those of the real Egyptians. Will you allow me to form a conjecture respecting them? And when delivered, if you think my antiquarianism as bad as Martinus Scriblerus's blue-rusted shield, laugh and welcome: I am ready enough to surrender my doctor's cap, and join most heartily in your mirth.

That they came originally from the East, I do not doubt; their complexion, dancing girls, customs, and Bedouin way of life, affirm the same. Their wide dispersion, throughout the whole of the known world, declares them to have been a persecuted people. There are none whom they resemble in this latter respect but the Jews: and it is from the Jews that I date them. Now do not make an outcry at this, but hear

me to the end, and you shall see how I will prove it anon. Memory! Memory! She is apt to play me many a jade's trick, and now she threatens to throw me again! But I have somewhere read (I think it was in a large work, of several folio volumes on the different religions) of a great dispersion of the Jews which took place immediately on the sacking of the Holy City by the Romans. Part fled into Egypt; and from thence, as they increased in population, subdivided again, and wandered into other countries; living separate from the people of the nations they visited, but subsisting by an affected power of foretelling future events.

Does not this description tally with the present vocation of the Gypsies? Do not the symmetry of features, hair, complexion, and eyes, of these itinerant tribes, all agree with the peculiar aspects of the sons of Israel? And beyond these evidences, if you require internal as well as external; is not the obstinacy with which they adhere to their own customs, and keep themselves distinct from the governments of the countries in which they sojourn, the very spirit of the Jews? The Jews are a separate people in every nation: and who at all resemble them in this respect but the Gypsies? I therefore consider them as one and the same race originally. But since their emigrating from Egypt, their first place of refuge (whence foreign nations gave them the name of Egyptians, or Gypsies), it is likely to suppose that many persons whom desperate fortunes or persecution might make homeless, would attach themselves to these free though houseless tribes. Hence would gradually arise that improvement in their posterity which now renders them in stature and expression a finer people than the modern Jews. Length of time, and wide dispersion, with their unsettled mode of life, by degrees taking from them all exercise of the rites of their religion:

we can easily comprehend how, in the progress of a few centuries, the marking points should be forgotten by them; and that they should feel no repugnance to marrying with the strangers who joined their bands; or to admit adventurers of all persuasions into their fraternity.

From a reason of this kind, I account for their continental name of **Bohemians**. During the terrible persecution of the Christians in the tenth century, under Boleslaus the Cruel, who expelled them Bohemia, many were driven from their native homes to perish amid the trackless forests of Poland, Germany and Russia. Travellers could no where go without meeting hordes of these unhappy people, sitting by the road sides, and feeding themselves and children on the wild pulse. Sometimes they moved in larger bodies, and sometimes in less; every where overspreading the countries in such multitudes, as to cause every itinerant groupe that appeared to be supposed a Bohemian. Hence the fewer tribes of Gypsies were confounded in the general swarm, and called Bohemians.

In a succeeding and more happy period the greater number of the persecuted Christians were recalled to their country by the pious successor of the tyrant of Bohemia: but some of them, preferring even a necessitous liberty to a chance of similar suffering, most likely would join themselves with the Gypsies, now called by their appellation; and so, though independent of their country, these adventurers found themselves acknowledged as Bohemians still. Less innocent associates, outlaws from their nations, might insinuate themselves amongst the hordes, perverting the original blamelessness of the poor wandering Israelites, and so initiating them into the several accomplishments of cheating, stealing, &c.



